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THE FUTURE OF THE HIGH NORTH

COOPERATION OR COLD WAR?

by

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Biography

Lieutenant Colonel Frank D. Hernes entered the Royal Norwegian Air Force (RNoAF) January 17, 1991, and received a Bachelor's degree from the RNoAF Academy in 1993. He received a Master's degree in mechanical engineering from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in 1998. He then served four years in the Propulsion Engineering Offices of the then-RNoAF Air Material Command (AMC), responsible for the propulsion systems of the RNoAF Saab Safari, Bell 412SP, C-130B/H, and P-3C. Following his assignment at RNoAF AMC he served five years at the Norwegian C-130B/H Maintenance Group at Gardermoen Air Station, first as Staff Officer, then Chief Quality Assurance Staff, Maintenance Squadron Leader, and Maintenance Group Commander. In 2008, he served at Kabul International Airport as Logistics Group Commander (ISAF). Upon return to Norway, he attended the Norwegian Air Command and Staff College in Oslo. Three years then followed in Chief Comptroller positions, first in the Norwegian Defense Logistics Organization's Production Division and secondly in the Supplies Division. He then served four years as the Norwegian Senior National Representative in the Multinational Fighter Program (MNFP) at the F-16 System Program Office (SPO) at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, U.S.A. Upon return to Norway in 2015, he entered the Norwegian F-35 Program as a Projects Officer. He is currently a student at the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Abstract

The High North was characterized by high tensions during the Cold War, but following the collapse of the Soviet Union became “less relevant.” However, it’s resuming an increasingly prominent geopolitical role. Melting sea ice is unlocking the region for exploitation of natural resources and opening previously unnavigable waters, again becoming an arena where Western and Russian interests converge. Historically, conflicts have not been over the region as such, but over the use of Arctic space. Furthermore, when conflict has found its way to the High North, it has originated elsewhere. This will in likelihood continue. Russian and Norwegian interests are to a high degree overlapping, and historically, the bilateral relationship has been characterized by pragmatic cooperation, also likely to continue, albeit in parallel to occasional confrontational discourses between Oslo and Moscow. Regionally, there are few sources of conflict; the five coastal states have primarily shared interests and are all strong guardians of UNCLOS, and there are strong regional multilateral institutions. Svalbard, and to a lesser degree the NSR, are potential exceptions and sources of conflict, though unlikely to go beyond bellicose rhetoric. Evaluating the region in isolation, the future is promising and will be characterized by stability and cooperation. However, there are threats to this cooperative climate. First, domestic developments in Russia may drive a change in Russian policies. Second, and most importantly, the region can never be seen in isolation from the broader international developments; geopolitics never dissipates. So, conflicts are likely to originate elsewhere. Russian revisionist resurgence challenges the status quo, increasing tensions with the U.S. and the West. More worrisome, Russia has shown the will and ability to use military means to achieve political goals in Crimea and the Ukraine. The High North, militarized beyond the requirements for purely constabulary tasks, will continue to depend on the framework formed by Russia’s relations with

the U.S. and NATO. Mistrust feeds this relationship, and until the negative perceptions are changed, their rivalry will continue, in turn trumping the High North's cooperative climate; the region will experience a new Cold War. Norway has no options beyond balancing its security ties with the U.S. with a pragmatic cooperation with Russia – and above all pursue mechanisms to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and dialogue to counter the true threat to Arctic stability; unintended escalation.



Introduction

During the Cold War, The High North¹ was characterized by high tension. It was the northern flank between the United States and the Soviet Union – between “hostile superpowers.”² The confrontation wasn’t over control of the region as such but over the strategic use of the Arctic space for military purposes³ – its “potential wartime role as a corridor for a nuclear strategic exchange.”⁴ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the region became geopolitically “less relevant,” characterized by mutual cooperation, few military exercises, and a “general lack of interest from the militaries of the respective Arctic states.”⁵ For Norway, this was a positive and appreciated development – but a fairly short-lived strategic pause. The region is resuming a prominent geopolitical role and in discourses on national security of Arctic states,⁶ proportional to receding Arctic sea ice and an increasingly strained relationship between Russia and the West. Some academics and political scientists have characterized the present as the start of a new cold war in the Arctic.⁷

The primary driver for renewed interest is the effect of climate change; melting sea ice is unlocking the region for exploitation of natural resources and opening previously unnavigable waters, again becoming an arena where Western and Russian interests converge. The “inescapable reality facing the world today is that the Arctic region is the next great frontier of international relations.”⁸ This concerns Norway, despite academics and political scientists disagreeing on the level and character of tensions in the region.⁹ The primary cause for Norway’s unease is Russia’s pursuit to reassert itself as a world power,¹⁰ to include occasional aggressive and nationalistic rhetoric, and a showcased willingness to “employ military power to advance [Russia’s] agenda outside Russia’s near abroad”¹¹ – simultaneously witnessing a remilitarization of the High North.

Russian national security strategy describes a nation protecting its sovereign rights in an important strategic region. As such, the strategy doesn't cause concern – depending on the reader's international relations subscription. Nevertheless, they are overshadowed by Russian analysts with "Cold War mentalities," influential and supporting Russian President Vladimir Putin's "distrust of the West,"¹² while military capabilities are exceeding those necessary to fulfill the requirements in national policies. Thus, Norway perceives Russia an "unpredictable neighbor,"¹³ and the question then begs; What are the Russian national interests in the Arctic? How are these compared to Norwegian interests, and is there a foundation for cooperation in the Arctic? Or will the region again become the arena of an East-West military-strategic confrontation? Albeit limited in scope, this paper seeks to answer these questions.

First, a historical narrative of the region's geopolitical relevance will be provided, and the background for the renewed interest. Second, Russian national interests will be presented, focusing primarily on the two with highest potential for conflicts with Norway; issues relating to energy and military-strategic interests. Third, Norwegian national interests will be disclosed, although briefly. Fourth, the topic of multilateral cooperation will be discussed, followed by potential conflicts between Russia and Norway. Finally, views on the future path to ensure stability in the region will be offered.

The scope of this paper disallows a comprehensive analysis of Russian and Norwegian interests in the High North. However, it's posited there's a strong foundation for mutual, stable interstate cooperation in the Arctic, notwithstanding the occurrence of disputed issues. The region's actors have more shared interests than conflicting ones, and the current international institutions supporting stability are strong.¹⁴ However, there are threats to this climate of cooperation. First, the possibility of a development within Russia altering Russian policy in the

Arctic, currently characterized by a pragmatic, cooperative approach to resolving contested issues. Second, the region's geopolitical position cannot be seen in isolation from broader international developments of the world order.¹⁵ Russian ambitions for reassertion as a global power are undebatable, and challenging the status quo. In turn, such assertion creates uncertainty, and “[h]istorically, periods of great and rapid change in global power relations have often led to conflict.”¹⁶ With Russian resurgence and rising regional powers, most notably China, there is great uncertainty what the future world order will look like – and thus, there's equal uncertainty for the future of the High North.

History, and renewed relevance

To understand the geopolitical relevance, it's beneficial with insight into the region's history – providing a sense of continuity. The region was a “latecomer” within international politics¹⁷ – for centuries only relevant to adventurers and visionaries. Exploitation of the region's natural resources started in the early 17th century.¹⁸ The status as *terra nullius*¹⁹ and the lack of regimes led to “fierce and sometimes violent” competition, primarily over hunting rights and the right to levy taxes.²⁰ Already in the 18th and 19th centuries the linkage between regional and global developments may be observed; power conflicts were primarily minor episodes in wars originating elsewhere.²¹ The first instance the region was fully drawn into armed conflict and geopolitical rivalry was World War I;²² Western Allies convoyed supplies to Russia through the North Atlantic and Barents Sea.²³

The Revolution of 1917 changed the interaction between Russia and its neighbors markedly, with a dramatic reduction in cross-border contact.²⁴ In a military-strategic perspective, the Arctic was generally low on the Soviet leadership's agenda, with the Northern Sea Route (NSR) a notable exception, despite a *recognition* of the Arctic as a vital region “from a number

of political, economic, propaganda, and military strategy perspectives.”²⁵ There was effectively no naval presence until 1933. The Northern Flotilla, renamed the Northern Fleet three years later, was established on the Kola inlet, its main task to support army operations and protect the internal sea lanes of transportation along the Siberian coast – the NSR.²⁶ World War II brought the region again into the crosshairs of geopolitical rivalry.

The Western allies resumed supply convoys to the Soviet Union, the northern route one of five utilized to deliver supplies, mostly under the Lend-Lease Program.²⁷ However, the apogee of the region’s geopolitical relevance was during the Cold War, the driving factors being geography and technology; it became a key avenue for targeting the adversary, providing the shortest flight paths for strategic bombers and missiles between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, while also providing both sides forward basing and staging benefits.²⁸ The Kola peninsula became the focal point of Soviet maritime strategic forces.²⁹ The Cold War cemented the High North’s geopolitical significance; defense of Western Europe rests on the ability to maintain the sea lines of communication (SLOC) between the U.S. and Western Europe open – in turn necessitating the need to hold Northern Norway and contain Russian forces in the north. Hence, the High North became the strategic northern flank of the Cold War,³⁰ and the region’s significance in securing the Atlantic SLOC is as critical in 2017 as it’s been since the last world wars.

The first step in ending the Cold War took place in the Arctic. On October 1, 1987, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev launched the “Murmansk Initiative,” a speech in which he appealed to the West to “join him in transforming the Arctic into a ‘zone of peace and fruitful cooperation’.”³¹ Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Norway witnessed a demilitarization of the region, the Cold War military infrastructure and weaponry neglected, in

turn transforming the High North to "...a zone for shared response to the new 'soft' security challenges [of the post-Cold War order], initially focusing on environmental issues with global implications."³² Hence, an optimism for cooperation and peaceful resolutions of contested issues eased Norwegian wariness.

While the region experienced a "strategic pause," the likelihood and expectation of easier access to the area's resources, previously deemed inaccessible, "has reawakened interest in the region from sovereign powers and from powers outside the region."³³ This ensures arctic security is again a key issue in all Arctic states, including Russia. Russian focus changed, from the "soft security challenges" in the 1990s and early 2000s, dramatically in 2007.³⁴ Noteworthy, Russia planted a flag on the seabed below the North Pole, proliferating "headlines warning of a new scramble for the Arctic."³⁵ Although theatrical, the event cautioned Norway, further uneased by the resumption of Russian long-range bomber patrols in 2007 and patrolling of Arctic waters by its Northern Fleet in 2008, both activities suspended after the Cold War. In these early years of Russian revival of its Arctic policy, "Russia put major emphasis on security aspects and the 'security first' agenda dominated"³⁶ – inducing concern in Oslo of Cold War-levels. It was in this period Norway initiated a vigorous pursuit of renewing attention to the Arctic. In 2005, i.e., Norway "declared the High North a strategic priority of its foreign policy," followed by the launching of the country's High North Strategy.³⁷ This was long before many other Arctic states started paying significant attention to the region's challenges and opportunities.

Russian policy took a "significant shift towards cooperation"³⁸ in 2010, likely motivated by Russia's claims to the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),³⁹ increased attention to the Arctic from states beyond the region, most notably China, and to Russian requirements for foreign investment and technology to ensure economic development.⁴⁰ This

emphasis in a cooperative approach notably led to a Russian acceptance of the Arctic Council (AC) in 1996,⁴¹ and its “transformation into a fully-fledged international organization,” and the 2010 delimitation agreement with Norway.⁴² However, demonstrating the Arctic’s role in Russian “nation building and... construction of national identities”⁴³ and to “demonstrate its power in the region to both domestic and international audiences, Russia continues to undertake various symbolic acts,”⁴⁴ i.e. the flag-planting in 2007 and expeditions of nuclear-powered battle cruisers along the NSR.⁴⁵

Russian national interests

Russia dominates the Arctic region. Half of the Arctic coastline, forty percent of the land beyond the Arctic circle, and seventy-five percent of the Arctic population is Russian.⁴⁶ Russia has “ventured into the north and controlled the Arctic land and sea routes” more than any other European power,⁴⁷ although its salience in a Russian national security perspective has varied. Within national security strategy, the region’s significance has primarily been related to the NSR and the country’s strategic nuclear forces, although the latter were neglected following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. From 1991, nearly two decades passed with practically “no ‘Arctic’ in Russian politics, and no special attention was paid to Arctic issues.”⁴⁸ However, this positively changed during Putin’s first tenure as President, 1999 through 2007, primarily due to his goal of reasserting Russia as a world power, the Arctic as a “source of national pride and identity” exploited for domestic purposes,⁴⁹ and to the importance of the region’s resources for Russian ambitions and economy (petroleum and fisheries⁵⁰). Putin’s nation building focuses on four key elements, one being “...patriotism... encompassed pride in Russian diversity, its history and its place in the world.”⁵¹ The Arctic is central to this. Moreover, the region is part of

Russia's broader security agenda – to maintain the strategic balance with the U.S. and protect its international image.⁵²

As noted, the Arctic was reintroduced in Russian grand strategy in 2007. In September 2008, the strategic document *Basics of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the Period until 2020 and for a Further Perspective* was adopted,⁵³ marking the new era in Russian Arctic policy. This was followed in 2013 by the adoption of *The Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security Protection*, fully displaying the “idealism turned to realism” in Russian strategy.⁵⁴ Thus, under Putin's leadership, the “optimism [characterizing the region from 1991 to 2007] for strengthened cooperation ... [was] replaced by sobering realism.”⁵⁵ This has been stoked by Russia's remilitarization of the Arctic and actions in most notably Crimea and the Ukraine, prompting the Norwegian Defense Minister to state in May 2014 “[w]e are in a completely new security situation where Russia shows both the ability and the will to use military means to achieve political goals,”⁵⁶ referring to Russia's war in Georgia in 2008 and military intervention the Ukraine in 2014.⁵⁷ Domestically, Putin's Arctic turn resonated. The “[g]lobal uncertainties and Western pressure have stimulated a resurgence of nationalist thinking in Russia.”⁵⁸ So, the Arctic is equally an important element in Russian domestic policy; “the ‘great power agenda’ [is] used as proof... of the effectiveness and success of... Putin's regime.”⁵⁹ But what's the Arctic's position in Russian national strategy?

During a meeting of the Security Council on state policy in the Arctic in April 2014, Putin cemented the region's importance for Russian national security: “[The Arctic] ... is a concentration of practically all aspects of national security – military, political, economic, technological and that of resources.”⁶⁰ The region is considered the country's “main treasure

chest,”⁶¹ containing important gas and oil reserves, minerals, and fisheries. Putin declared furthermore “[o]ur goal is not only to fully restore [Russian] positions, but... make them even stronger.”⁶² While cautious about context, this is a clear message to both domestic and foreign audiences – notably received in Oslo. Further, “...we will continue to invest heavily in the Arctic, to resolve issues dealing with this area’s socioeconomic development, and strengthen security. This is a matter of national security.”⁶³

Reflecting this, the Arctic is specifically mentioned in the national security strategy for Russia, approved December 31, 2015. In general, the document describes a Russia focusing on increasing its influence and prestige, strengthening national unity, and who’s confident its goals are being met⁶⁴ – although Russian concern with its economy is undeniably discernable. It describes a Russia feeling threatened by the U.S. and its allies, and sees “...constraints on its ambitions as threats to be overcome.”⁶⁵ Finally, the strategy confirms Moscow “interprets the Arctic as fostering a potentially drastic shift in Russia’s long-term geostrategic identity.”⁶⁶

Specifically, the national security strategy states “leadership in exploiting the resources of the world’s oceans and the Arctic is acquiring particular significance...”⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Arctic is explicitly identified as a region Russia will pursue a “widening use of the instruments of state-private partnership to perform strategic tasks in the development of the economy, the completion of the formation of the basic transportation, energy, information, and military infrastructure, *particularly in the Arctic* ... and the development of the Northern Sea Route...”⁶⁸ Lastly – but of particular relevance in the context of this paper – the Russian national security strategy states “[t]he development of equal and mutually beneficial international cooperation in the Arctic is of particular significance.”⁶⁹ Russia is undeniably an “Arctic superpower,” and it

considers the region a “key development driver of the country in the twenty-first century.”⁷⁰

With the centrality of the region established, what are the concrete national interests?

Russian interests in the Arctic can be grouped in six categories, echoing the national security strategy: access to natural resources; industrial significance; transportation; environmental concerns; indigenous people; and the strategic-military significance.⁷¹ While all are worthy in-depth studies, the focus of this paper is the “three key components of Russia’s Arctic policy of crucial importance to Russia’s image of itself as a ‘great power’ internationally;”⁷² the NSR, energy, and the northern military capabilities.⁷³ While important to Russian national identity and entertaining a key role in the development of the Russian Arctic, the NSR’s salience in the context of this paper is low.⁷⁴ Norway and Russia disagree on its status, but the reduction in passages, Canada’s position on the Northwest Passage,⁷⁵ high costs for infrastructure, and effects of geopolitical and geoeconomic factors on shipping – to name only a few – markedly limit the potential for a Norwegian-Russian conflict. Energy and re-militarization are the most salient issues in this context, and is further explored.

Energy

Russia is an energy powerhouse:⁷⁶ the world’s largest producer of crude oil, the second-largest producer of dry natural gas, and with significant amounts of coal.⁷⁷ “Russia’s economic growth is driven by energy exports,”⁷⁸ critical to realize its ambitions. Russia has truly become a petrostate,⁷⁹ deliberately relying on natural resources to revive the economy,⁸⁰ although it may seem the Russian regime is realizing this. In his annual address to the Federal Assembly in 2016, Putin stated “...the main reasons for our economic slowdown are to be found above all in our internal problems, and above all in the lack of investment resources, modern technology, professional human resources, insufficient competition, and shortcomings in our business

climate.”⁸¹ Currently, though, the Russian Arctic accounts for two-thirds of all Russian oil and gas reserves,⁸² and “...for about 20 percent of Russia’s GDP and 22 percent of its exports.”⁸³ The Arctic’s energy resources are crucial to Russia’s exceptionally energy-intensive economy.⁸⁴ Exploitation of Arctic petroleum deposits is however an “expensive and long-term endeavor,”⁸⁵ primarily due to short drilling seasons, geographical remoteness, climatic conditions, and the costs for production and transportation. The U.S. shale revolution and Western sanctions following Russian involvement in the Ukraine have drastically “affected Russian Arctic energy production,”⁸⁶ even leading to an admission by Putin that “Russia was falling into a recession.”⁸⁷ In addition to petroleum resources, the Arctic hosts considerable resources of nonferrous and precious minerals.⁸⁸ Control over resources is thus a driving factor in Russian political discourse, with the undersea hydrocarbon resources on the Arctic continental shelf acquiring particular prominence.

In Putin’s April 2014 Security Council-speech, this was prevalent; “A pressing issue that requires careful work is the legal formalization, in line with international law, of the outer boundary of Russia’s continental shelf in the Arctic ocean.”⁸⁹ The Russian legal tradition of delimitating Arctic waters was “long characterized by the notion of the sectoral line,”⁹⁰ something the Soviet Union stuck to throughout its existence. However, this position softened after 1991, Russia aligning with the UNCLOS principles;⁹¹ these define “the median line as the basic principle of division of maritime territories.”⁹² While Putin is characteristically firm – “[our experts] should hold on to every area of the Arctic continental shelf of Russia and its maritime basins”⁹³ – Russian policy is responsible: “I would like to stress that this country is interested in the region’s sustainable development based on cooperation and absolute respect of international law.”⁹⁴ Russia has honored this position, through submitting claims to the U.N. in

2001,⁹⁵ the first nation to do so, and through the 2010 delimitation agreement with Norway.⁹⁶ The latter is an example where “common... interests in resource development trump[ed] traditional security concerns...”⁹⁷ In August 2015, Russia resubmitted its claim, as the claim in 2001 was deemed insufficient. The U.N.⁹⁸ is currently reviewing this, and the outcome will be a paramount test of Russian commitment to international law, as stated in its national security strategy and affirmed by Putin on numerous occasions.

The presented position regarding the salience of the Arctic resources for Russia and its economy demands a cautionary note. It’s predicated on the assumption the resources can be extracted and transported cost-efficiently for Russia. This seems nonviable with the current price of oil. If prices maintain its current level, or drop further, the Arctic resources may proportionally become less significant – and the same can be said if sanctions remain in place. Currently, a “Russian energy bonanza offshore is unlikely,”⁹⁹ and one may then further question whether the resources in the Arctic in general will be an important global source. Of equal relevance is the current development of alternative and renewable energy sources, which may outpace the drive for the region’s resources. Both these factors represent uncertainty and doubt about the region’s hydrocarbon resources and their significance. Should developments reduce the significance, it would change the calculi of the region’s future.

Strategic-Military significance

The High North has a distinctly unique place in Russian defense strategy.¹⁰⁰ In addition to being the primary base of the Russian strategic nuclear arsenal, it’s significant for early warning and basing of strategic bombers.¹⁰¹ The Northern Fleet remains Russia’s largest fleet and includes a number of missile-carrying strategic submarines,¹⁰² in turn underscoring the region’s cardinal significance; it secures access to the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁰³ This is vital for the

ability to sever the Atlantic SLOC, to defend the Russian “bastion,”¹⁰⁴ and ensure freedom of navigation of the strategic nuclear submarines. The nuclear deterrent is still a “key element [in] Russian military strategy”¹⁰⁵ and equally as important a symbol and guarantor for Russia’s status as a great power.

Russia is less concerned with the threat of a nuclear war in 2017,¹⁰⁶ and is concentrating increasingly on threats stemming from climate change, competition over the natural resources, and the NSR¹⁰⁷ – beyond strategic balancing with the U.S. Russian Military Doctrine specifically proclaims one of the main tasks of the Armed Forces is “to protect national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic region.”¹⁰⁸ As such, Russian forces in the High North are in addition to military functions focused on environmental protection, SAR operations, poaching, smuggling, and illegal immigration.¹⁰⁹ This is the driving force for modernization, according to Russian authorities; not to seek military superiority by adding offensive capabilities¹¹⁰ but for an improved ability to fulfill a constabulary role in the Arctic.¹¹¹ “Russian military build-up... is only based on Russia’s concern with defending its own vast northern regions...”¹¹² Nonetheless, Russian modernization is increasingly considered a “remilitarization of the Arctic,” despite Russian claims to the contrary. Disputable intentions aside, the High North’s importance to Russia’s national military-strategic goals is undebatable, as are the modernization plans;¹¹³ in 2012, Putin announced a decision to allocate 20 trillion rubles to modernize the military and 3 trillion to modernize its defense-industrial complex.¹¹⁴

Already stated, the end of the Cold War brought about a deterioration of military infrastructure and capabilities. The Russian defense industry suffered financial constraints following 1991, leading to obsolete production facilities and acute shortage of skilled workers,¹¹⁵ and is a major contributor to current challenges. Sixty-nine strategic submarines were operational

in the Soviet Navy in 1989, i.e., while today's Russian Navy has twelve.¹¹⁶ And while the Russian Air Force received no new aircraft between 1993 and 2003, only three were received between 2003 and 2009.¹¹⁷ The deterioration of capabilities is the driver for ambitious modernization programs, launched by Putin during his first tenure¹¹⁸ and repeated in his April 2014 speech; "We are strengthening our military infrastructure in the region."¹¹⁹ When initiated, the modernization programs were unsurprising, given the state of infrastructure and capabilities. Restoring these capabilities is indubitably linked to Russian safeguarding of sovereignty. Armed forces in the region have three objectives: to demonstrate and ascertain sovereignty; to protect economic interests;¹²⁰ and to demonstrate that Russia retains its great power status and "has world class military capabilities."¹²¹

As means to realize these objectives, Russia has launched a plethora of measures; plans to establish two Arctic brigades were announced in 2011;¹²² rearmament programs have been launched for the Northern Fleet;¹²³ a number of airfields in the region have been reactivated or are planned to;¹²⁴ the Joint Military Command 'North' was established and operational from December 1, 2014, co-located with the Northern Fleet;¹²⁵ military exercises have increased;¹²⁶ re-opening of fifty previously closed Soviet-era military bases has been announced;¹²⁷ and Russian special forces in the Arctic territory have increased by thirty percent;¹²⁸ to name only a few. Although military doctrines may not develop aggressive posturing by the government, Russian military ambitions remain high,¹²⁹ especially for the Northern Fleet, notably to "strengthen the security of its northern borders and safety of transportation routes and infrastructure..."¹³⁰ Reflecting the latter, Russia has "undertaken a 'construction blitz' in the Arctic;" thirteen new airfields planned, ten SAR stations, sixteen deep-water ports, ten air

defense radars,¹³¹ and twenty new border posts¹³² – all to secure its border and the NSR, and herein lies the controversy;

Norway acknowledges Russia's protection of its sovereignty and sovereign rights but the military mobilization and modernization programs are revitalized while there is increasing uncertainty what the Russian intentions truly are. The military build-up continues while Moscow "[isn't] provid[ing] clarity on how these enhanced military resources could necessarily be deployed to improve SAR and oil spill response...."¹³³ Regrettably, the build-up appears more to be development of Russian anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) capabilities in the Arctic.¹³⁴ What underscores the questionability of the Russian build-up is the substantial drop in economic development in the region since 2014, primarily a result of sanctions and "a fifty percent plunge in global energy prices."¹³⁵ The extensive force mobilization and development of security infrastructure appear dubious when justified on "the basis of domestic economic activity and an anemic level of international transits."¹³⁶ Norway welcomes appropriate measures to increase societal security proportionally to expansion of economic and human activity. But the excessive build-up, paired with Russian ambitions, and its belligerence in foreign policy creates an increasingly insecure Norway. The expansion of offensive military capabilities, notably A2/AD-capabilities,¹³⁷ only increases the asymmetric relationship and heightens Norwegian vulnerability.¹³⁸ As noted by Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg in May 2016: "We consider the Atlantic our lifeline. ... Today we are facing military-strategic changes that could jeopardize this lifeline. We must ensure that sea lines of communication remain open for supplies and reinforcements in times of crisis and war."¹³⁹

Yet, Russia faces great challenges. Costs of the modernization programs is chief among these, creating an ever-increasing gap between ambitions and reality. The Russian Air Force, i.e.,

suffered severe setbacks in its early years when “funding for research and development ground to a halt,”¹⁴⁰ leading to a reduction in size and sustainability issues.¹⁴¹ The Russian strategic bomber fleet will increasingly have operational issues – and the Navy faces similar challenges.¹⁴² For the Northern fleet specifically, there has been little change in the past decade beyond aging.¹⁴³ The Navy’s backbone is the submarine forces and the littoral combat units,¹⁴⁴ whose status is no better.¹⁴⁵ Russian capabilities are ripe for modernization but face massive financial challenges in the face of sanctions and reduced energy prices.¹⁴⁶ The decline observed from 1991 continues, despite ambitions – and prospects for near-time improvements are bleak. Regardless, Russia will maintain significant military capabilities in the north, “to protect its nuclear forces [the key rationale of its Arctic fleets] and secure its economic interests,”¹⁴⁷ and these capabilities are unquestionably being enhanced. And Russia furthermore “places high value on the development of cruise and ballistic missiles which can reach all parts of Europe from Russian territory and... vessels.”¹⁴⁸ Disregarding the realities of the modernization plans, Russian capabilities remain an issue of concern for Norway.

Adding to Norwegian (and Western) unease is the observation of Russia’s renewed military thinking, more specifically on non-linear warfare, as observed in the Ukraine. Russian staffs seem to have adopted – although again, caution is needed to avoid drawing premature conclusions – a “new method and techniques for the conduct of war,”¹⁴⁹ using “a core group of elite troops along with a wide-array of non-military means while concealing... true geopolitical intentions and surreptitiously influencing its competitor’s decision-making algorithms.”¹⁵⁰ Valeriy Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, has stated “remote non-contact influence on an enemy is becoming the main method of achieving goals...” – thus acknowledging Russia’s “current strategy involves the use of indirect and asymmetric operations... [allowing] the

avoidance of a direct confrontation.”¹⁵¹ While Norway and the West will remain vigilant to Russian military capabilities in the High North, NATO “needs new intelligence analysis and strategic forecasting capabilities for getting a grip on the new Russian challenge.”¹⁵² The argument is simply “...technical capabilities need to be combined with those that focus on hybrid conflict, and analysis needs to go beyond conventional military indicators.”¹⁵³ As the High North is considered an arena on which Russian costs will outweigh benefits if hard power is applied, that exact calculus necessitates an increased Norwegian and NATO vigilance towards Russian non-military methods in pursuit of political goals. It’s acknowledged military action, direct or indirect, towards Norway (or any NATO member) represents a higher threshold and involves greater risk than action towards e.g. Georgia or the Ukraine.¹⁵⁴ The mere fact that Russia reclaimed Crimea without overt Western intervention, beyond deployment of “[U.S., U.K. and Canadian] military instructors to Ukraine, in order to train that country’s armed formations for self-defense,”¹⁵⁵ ought to be studied to identify lessons.¹⁵⁶ Crimea represents a Russian strategic victory, rather than the tactical victory it should have been – a lesson most certainly learned in Moscow.

Norwegian national interests

Norway perceives the High North as “a strategic resource base that is extremely important to the national economy,”¹⁵⁷ and Norway’s High North diplomacy remains *inform and engage*.¹⁵⁸ The region’s centrality in Norwegian national security is prevalent in messaging from Oslo. Then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas G. Støre, stated in 2006, prophetically: “In the years to come, the High North will be one of the most important strategic areas in the world” during a speech succinctly titled “The High North – Top of the world – Top of the agenda.”¹⁵⁹ They are echoed by current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Børge Brende, in his equally concisely

titled statement published April 16, 2015, “The Arctic: Important for Norway, important for the world:” “...the High North [isn’t] just at the top of the world; [it’s] at the top of our... foreign-policy priorities.”¹⁶⁰ There are primarily two factors in the region’s strategic importance to Norway. First, the region’s economic potential, regarding both fishery and petroleum resources, and second, the High North’s “geopolitically important location next to Russia.”¹⁶¹

There are five pillars discernable in Norwegian strategy for the High North: environmental protection; sustainable development of resources; rights of indigenous peoples; develop transport; and cooperation with Russia,¹⁶² nearly indistinguishable to those in Russian national security strategies. Without describing these interests in further detail, it’s claimed that these are all overlapping interests with Russia,¹⁶³ beyond the military-strategic. In the latter’s regard, Norway acknowledges the asymmetric relationship, and seeks NATO vigilance in the High North (and revitalizing NATO focus on common defense). Regarding the relationship with Russia, on “NATO’s northern flank and as neighbor to Russia, [Norway has] a special responsibility for ensuring stability in the High North,” according to Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg. However, as Norway reminds its security partners, it’s not “solely a Norwegian responsibility... [NATO has] an interest in keeping this area stable and peaceful.”¹⁶⁴

Multilateral cooperation and potential areas of conflict

Despite diverging positions on the character and breadth, mirroring scholars’ assumptions on international relations,¹⁶⁵ “a real multipolar system exists... in the Arctic.”¹⁶⁶ While the Cold War order rested on military strength, the contemporary governance rests on common interests and a willingness to pursue them.¹⁶⁷ However, a telling description of Arctic cooperation is that “[it’s] still represented by two camps: Russia and the rest.”¹⁶⁸ Notable and important exceptions exist, i.e. in the Illulissat declaration, signed in 2008;¹⁶⁹ the Arctic Five¹⁷⁰ are committed to

“treat[ing] the Arctic Ocean as an unexceptional space, governed by international law.”¹⁷¹ This message was reinforced through the declaration, “designed to both reassure and... remind the global audience that the Arctic Ocean [isn’t] *terra nullius*.”¹⁷² They committed to “an orderly settlement of any overlapping claims. ...[and] see no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean.”¹⁷³ This language reflects the actuality that current Arctic governance has “fundamentally, been about cooperation... to advance national interests... [and] build cooperation where national sovereignty could be extended...”¹⁷⁴

The Arctic states remain firmly committed to managing the region themselves. The AC creates “shared norms and trust in the region” but not a regionalism built on shared sovereignty and integration, as that of i.e. the E.U. The multilateralism in the Arctic is “aimed at strengthening the sovereignty of the Arctic states”¹⁷⁵ – and this “insistence on respect for sovereign rights by the coastal states remains the basis of Arctic governance at all key levels.”¹⁷⁶ This is a principal overlapping interest of Norway and Russia (and all Arctic states), further generating optimism for future cooperation. Notwithstanding, there are potential areas of conflict.

Norway seeks to increase its security in the region through two paths. First, “with a firm foot in NATO,”¹⁷⁷ and second, through bilateral engagement with Russia,¹⁷⁸ resembling the Cold War’s policy of reassurance and deterrence.¹⁷⁹ This balance is challenging. Feet in NATO, although with an outstretched hand to Russia (occasionally to the frustration of the U.S.¹⁸⁰), feeds the Russian narrative infusing its national security strategy; “the U.S. and its allies [including Norway] seek to contain Russia...”¹⁸¹ Russian strategy is about increasing power, at home and abroad. As such, Norway’s role in NATO, and its political and security ties to the U.S., will continue to feed the Russian narrative of the West’s containment of Russia and its

ambitions, real or artificially induced for a domestic audience. The observed political attitudes in Moscow may imply that “Russia cannot feel comfortable, most likely threatened, if its neighbors seek to strengthen their security and defense. The better prepared Russia’s small neighbors are to defend themselves... the more Russia feels ‘threatened’.”¹⁸² Notwithstanding a cooperative, pragmatic relationship, the mere proximity of the military capabilities and the incompatible state principles only serve to intensify Norway’s Atlantic security ties.¹⁸³ The Norwegian balancing act is a delicate one, demanding continuous attention, commitment, and focus.

In Russia, despite occasional aggressive rhetoric and posturing, cooperation in the region has been the primary theme since 2010. Anything altering this cooperative climate is cause for concern. The Russian approach places a strong emphasis on regionalism, most notably through the AC, offering the opportunity to maximize Russian sovereignty while shielding the region from external involvement, “except on the terms defined by the regional powers.”¹⁸⁴ The potential fault lines in Russian policies that may alter the cooperative dynamics in the region are however the NSR, territorial delimitation, and fisheries. Herein lies thus potential bilateral conflicts with Norway;¹⁸⁵ the interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty and the status of the NSR, critically the former.¹⁸⁶

The Svalbard Treaty was signed in 1920,¹⁸⁷ came into force in 1925, and granted Norway sovereignty over the archipelago. However, there are “conditions that restrict the enactment of Norwegian sovereignty;” first, stakeholders of signatory states “enjoy the same rights of access to Svalbard as does Norway, [i.e.] when it comes to exploitation of natural resources.”¹⁸⁸ Second, taxation is restricted to collecting funds needed for administration of Svalbard, and may not be used to increase Norwegian state revenues. Norway argues that the continental shelf around Svalbard is not subject to the treaty – a challenged interpretation.¹⁸⁹ While not part of the

negotiations to the treaty – incidentally prompting a “northward Soviet thrust”¹⁹⁰ – Russia recognized Norwegian sovereignty in 1924.¹⁹¹ Of a more recent date, Norway established a 200-mile Fisheries Protection Zone around Svalbard in 1977.¹⁹² Russia protested this but – characteristic of the pragmatic relationship – has in practice “encouraged its fishermen to abide by Norwegian regulations.”¹⁹³ Despite the pragmatic collaboration, interpretation of the treaty continues to be contested, with the U.K., Spain, Iceland, and Russia the most opposed to the Norwegian position.¹⁹⁴ The most critical issue relates to potential petroleum resources under the continental shelf surrounding the islands. With the current energy price, the issue of potential oil and gas development and whether it will have the Norwegian tax regime imposed isn’t pressing.¹⁹⁵ However, the issue is likely to return following an increase in energy prices. Generally, Svalbard epitomizes a Norwegian “attention versus interference paradox;” Norway works hard to draw allies’ attention to the region, while such attention may challenge the desire to manage the region without “outside interference.”¹⁹⁶

Independently of Svalbard, Norway and Russia settled their delimitation issue in the Barents Sea in 2010. There are no overlapping claims at present, although Russia has overlapping claims with other Arctic states (and all are NATO members).¹⁹⁷ It has pursued a policy regarding claims in line with UNCLOS, and there are admittedly no signs of this changing. However, with the Arctic’s role in nation building and Russian identity, the extensive UNCLOS process may challenge domestic patience. Further, if the U.N. again rule against Russia, increased nationalistic fervor, “directed toward the Arctic, could encourage Russian authorities to be less reasonable...” and start asserting unilateral claims.¹⁹⁸ Russians “continue to follow the elite, and the elite fears that repudiating great-power status would pull the rug out from under it.”¹⁹⁹ As long as Russia remains centrally governed, it’s highly unlikely Moscow

will have anything to gain from destabilizing the region. It cannot, however, be ruled out that political and/or economic developments “go in a wrong direction,” driving the regime to “defuse domestic tensions through military adventures...”²⁰⁰ Domestic threats to the Russian leadership may, in short, destabilize the region, especially in view of the region’s role in nation building and the regime’s legitimacy.

A Russian pivot towards China may also affect the cooperative climate. The cause for such a potential move accentuates the Arctic’s role in broader security relations; Russian involvement in the Ukraine. Part of Western sanctions, a ban on export of oil equipment needed for petroleum extraction is in effect – and since development of Arctic resources isn’t solely an economic priority but a security issue, Russia is “reconsider[ing] its policy of involving Western countries in Arctic projects.”²⁰¹ The agreement between Norwegian Statoil, France’s Total, and Russian Gazprom, to explore the Russian Shtokman field, has i.e. been postponed.²⁰² Although other projects proceed – Statoil announced it continues plans to drill wells for Rosneft, after ensuring it stays in compliance with sanctions – others experience delays.²⁰³ This pushes Russia to “hedge risks and diversify its political and economic partners,” with a potential “cooling down” of Arctic cooperation as a result.²⁰⁴ Companies are increasingly turning to Asia, China in particular, for alternative financing, putting Russia in the “unenviable position of both encouraging greater Chinese investment in the Arctic while increasingly wary of China’s presence.”²⁰⁵ It’s a Russian “attention versus interference paradox,” similar in character; allowing China a deeper role in the region may challenge the Arctic states’ goal of managing the region themselves, a foundational common interest.

Positive examples of continued cooperation, despite harsh rhetoric between state capitols, are observed. Currently, i.e., Norwegian “[i]ntelligence agency chiefs believe that Russia’s

current 'displeasure' with Norway is linked to the Norwegian government's desire to see a greater security stabilization role for NATO and the U.S. in the High North."²⁰⁶ Further Russian "displeasure" is linked to Norwegian participation in sanctions due to the Ukraine, but despite this, cooperation between the Norwegian and Russian coast guards has continued. This highlights an added benefit and a paramount lesson; continued "low-key" cooperation is "...means to keeping channels and dialogue open to minimize misunderstandings and dangerous situations,"²⁰⁷ regardless of geopolitics. As the Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg affirmed in 2015; "We have a long history of cooperating with Russia in the High North, even in times of political differences. Predictability is key. A predictable military presence in the High North ensures stability."²⁰⁸

The future of the High North

As noted, views of the Arctic's future vary, from the pessimistic "new Cold War"-rhetoric, often in the media, to the more optimistic consensus among academics for the chances of continued cooperation.²⁰⁹ Analyzing the interests of Norway and Russia, it's clear the primary interests revolve around consolidation of territories, the extension of continental shelves, and influence; "sovereign rights are at the center of discussions on the Arctic."²¹⁰

Regionally, the potential sources of conflict generally relate to competition for resources or unsettled maritime disputes, as described.²¹¹ There is evidence these issues will be resolved through cooperation, despite equally available evidence of "Putinism's" characteristic belligerent foreign policy, producing an increase of Russian coercive diplomacy through energy, cyber, and maritime power.²¹² As indisputable as Russian actions in the Ukraine are, an inescapable reality is the country's dependence on international cooperation in the Arctic in order to realize its economic potential. And there can be no such cooperation without predictability, transparency,

and trust. There is no doubt Russia will continue to invest militarily and economically – yet “this investment is at profound risk if instability... persists.”²¹³ To note, Russia has shown the will and ability to cooperate. Regional issues, such as the Svalbard zone and maritime boundaries, led to an “intensification of intra-Arctic dynamics,”²¹⁴ as demonstrated in Ilullisat. Further, shared interests have resulted in collaboration regarding fisheries, notwithstanding Russian rhetorical opposition to the Svalbard-zone. Lastly, Russia has participated in the establishment of viable institutions, most prominently the AC,²¹⁵ enhancing the stability and prevented disagreements from escalating. Alas, with Arctic blinders, the future of the High North is promising. Although positive cooperation has and is likely to continue regionally, however, the High North can never be seen in isolation. Regardless of measures, “[geopolitics] never completely dissipates.”²¹⁶

Herein lies the greatest uncertainty for the future of the High North; the connection between regional and global security ensures the region’s future will reflect global geopolitical developments.²¹⁷ Conflict is likely to originate elsewhere, using the region as a proxy.²¹⁸ The future of the Arctic cooperation relies hence on safety valves to minimize spillover from conflicts elsewhere. It has i.e. been suggested that “to consolidate the soft power ‘pattern’ of Russia’s behavior... a proper international environment in the Arctic should be created by common efforts,”²¹⁹ although it may be argued the AC is already such an institution. However, at its establishment in 1996 the U.S. insisted the AC “was not permitted to discuss military or security matters.”²²⁰ It may further be argued that “there is little prospect of [an] emergence of a ‘genuine security community’ in... the short term,” primarily due to an emerged balance: the idea of cooperation as being the best way to advance national sovereignty and security.²²¹ Seeing the region as a potential area of security threats has predominately shifted to seeing the provision of security as a key to unlocking the region’s opportunities.²²² The challenge lies in the

institution; while today's governance is predominately through the AC, this is a consensus-based approach. It works well to the point no consensus is reached.²²³ Limitations of scope unfortunately preclude a further examination of the idea of establishing a regional security architecture. But it's offered time seems ripe for the Arctic states to re-visit the idea of a multilateral organization for security in the Arctic. While there is already "extensive international cooperation on Arctic issues,"²²⁴ security issues would be better served in a dedicated forum and formalized setting to meet, despite the challenge this may represent to involved states' sovereignty.

An interest Norway and Russia share, along with all Arctic Eight states, repeatedly stated, is the desire to "draw up the rules of the game [in the Arctic] without too much outside interference."²²⁵ This is a two-edged sword; it may secure extensive cooperation on security matters but may equally antagonize a "wider world calling for global rather than regional governance."²²⁶ A significant uncertainty lies in how the Arctic Five deal with views and concerns of "outsiders," most notably China, Japan, and South Korea.²²⁷ These believe they have legitimate interests and concerns in the maritime Arctic, and especially China "will find Arctic resources attractive, make significant footprints in commercial shipping, and possibly establish a visible military presence in the Arctic."²²⁸ The "rise of Asia in general... is of paramount importance even in the north."²²⁹ A new world order is unarguably emerging, possibly to a multipolar, or bipolar, or even a non-polar order²³⁰ – but regardless polarity, it will be reflected in the north. How "the wider world stacks up" is a major factor affecting the High North.²³¹

So, key to ensuring stability and cooperation in the region lies in balancing a "confluence of international economic development, environmental protection, and security concerns."²³² In the meantime, Norway will continue its balancing act in the face of "the duality of Russia's

Arctic policies – belligerence and practical cooperation...”²³³ Transparency and predictability are keys, and Norway needs to continue pursuing multilateral cooperative arrangements on Arctic matters. Pursuing policies of “firm line-drawing toward Russia” and active cooperation are not antithetical. Nevertheless, Norway cannot “define itself outside of its neighborhood.”²³⁴ Inasmuch Russia’s orientation remains interest-based, cooperation is achievable, insofar both countries benefit. As the Norwegian Ministry of Defense acknowledges; strategic patience is paramount.²³⁵

Although it may be deemed a naïve notion, especially within contexts of international relations, a reality Norway and Russia both must acknowledge is “[t]hreats and rhetoric from one side have an impact on the other side’s perceptions and actions, and this interaction can either be a mutually reinforcing positive or negative spiral.”²³⁶ For Norway and Russia, the future success of the pursuit of “an adaptive equilibrium between sovereignty and national interests... and broader international interests of stability, security, and environmental protection...”²³⁷ relies on communication and smart diplomacy. It’s paramount to establish mechanisms to avoid episodes and crises “liv[ing] a life of their own and escalat[ing].”²³⁸ Contact must be nurtured and notification mechanisms resilient during crises, whether military or civilian in character, ensuring “crisis stability.”²³⁹ Incident-management agreements between Russia and individual NATO states exist, but “gaps remain... [and] they are not harmonized with one another and do not properly account for civilian activities or modern technologies, including unmanned vehicles such as drones.”²⁴⁰

Lastly, Norway must continue to generate and pursue the “shared perception that all parties would be best suited by living up to agreements and understandings,”²⁴¹ and adhering to international law. In this perspective, the future of the High North should be promising; in

Putin's annual address to the Russian Federal Assembly December 1, 2016, he stated yet again "...we affirm the principles of justice and mutual respect in international affairs... and we support respect for international law and global diversity."²⁴² Yet, the West has heard such rhetoric before, and Russia showed a blatant disregard for international law in Georgia, Crimea and the Ukraine.

Conclusion

Despite an abundance of theories about the future of the Arctic, many will remain just that. Several have little "predictive currency... because they fail to account for historical and situational variables that change according to the unit of interest."²⁴³ For the High North, trends must be identified and analyzed, and history consulted, producing probable outcomes following choices in policy – providing Norway alternative paths in pursuing national interests. Predictions should, thus, be offered to inform policy discourse,²⁴⁴ and for those providing strategic advice, a "perceptive understanding of the present based on historical knowledge is the essential first step for thinking about the future."²⁴⁵ For this reason, this paper first offered a brief history of the High North's geopolitical significance and role in international affairs.

The primary benefit has been to emphasize continuity; historically, the eras in which the region had geopolitical prominence, conflicts have not been over the region as such, but over the use of the region. Although unlikely, there is a potential this may change. The presence of resources, particularly hydrocarbon, under the Arctic seabed and conflicting claims has undeniably the potential for future conflict, especially those surrounding Svalbard. While opposing claims in the Arctic are subject to international law and likely to be resolved in line with UNCLOS principles, the Svalbard zone has a distinctly unique legal status. Although controversial, based on historic cooperation and a desire to keep tension low in the region, it's

unlikely Norway and Russia will allow an escalation of disagreements go beyond dueling rhetoric – notwithstanding a likely continued occurrence of engagements between the Norwegian Coast Guard and Russian trawlers. Cooperation may truly be considered the sole option in “meeting challenges emerging in the vast and evolving Arctic security environment, with its still many unforeseen scenarios and consequences.”²⁴⁶ However, another major continuity must be recognized; when conflict has found its way to the High North, its causes have originated elsewhere. So, while the Arctic states pursue cooperation, mechanisms must be established to reduce the risk of spillover from conflict elsewhere on the globe, continued dialogue, predictability, and transparency. A topic needing further study is accordingly the viability of a multilateral organization for security issues. The current prominent institution is the AC, but this forum is prevented from discussing matters of clashing national security issues.

The Russian national security strategy has furthermore been reviewed, confirming the importance of the region for Russia, and national interests narrated. The latter echo the former, and are grouped within natural resources, industrial significance, transportation, environmental concerns, indigenous people, and strategic-military significance. These overlap to a high degree Norwegian interests, but energy and military-strategic issues have been provided special attention, as these represent potential conflicting issues between Norway and Russia. As to energy, cooperation between Norway and Russia is strong, and likely to continue so long technology allows cost-efficient extraction and transportation, and Norway and Russia both benefit. Looking beyond Svalbard, the delimitation issue between Norway and Russia has been resolved. Pragmatic cooperation seems to be most likely, even as the Moscow-Oslo relationship cools on other issues. As to the military-strategic, Norway does not fear a military confrontation with Russia, despite a remilitarization of the region. However, the region will be affected by the

general relationship between the U.S./NATO and Russia. The Russian re-militarization of the High North is an element in Russia's strategic balancing with the U.S., ensuring Russian access to the Atlantic, the capability to sever the Atlantic SLOC in a conflict, and securing its strategic nuclear forces – the guarantor for world power status and key to balancing the U.S. Russia denies re-militarization, referring to an increased need for capabilities to ensure societal security. However, the capabilities exceed those needed for constabulary tasks and serves to increase Norwegian insecurity.

As the security and military arena produces a complex picture, there is common ground among the Arctic states for the need to address societal security challenges, for instance oil spills, sabotage, smuggling, illegal immigration, and ship accidents.²⁴⁷ Societal security is a striking and obvious issue providing promising potential for cooperation, especially considering diverging security interests, and should be actively pursued. The benefits of such cooperation are obvious, but a second order effect would include mechanisms and channels of communication in crises situations, regardless of character.

For Norwegian security, there are no other viable paths for the state beyond a continued balance of consolidating security ties with the U.S. and a continued lobbying for NATO vigilance in the Arctic on one side, and the pursuit of dialogue and cooperation with Russia on the other; "...balanc[ing] deterrence with dialogue."²⁴⁸ "Partnering" may be a step too far, but a pragmatic cooperation between Norway and Russia based on common interests is realistic, as noted²⁴⁹ As certain as the presence of the Russian military capabilities are in the region, so is Russia's reliance on the resources of the Arctic undisputable. The strategic rivalry with the U.S. and Russia's ambitions are expensive enterprises. Access to these resources demand stability and peace, and "keeping tensions low is mutually profitable for all."²⁵⁰ Thus, it's likely the pragmatic

cooperation witnessed pre-2007 will return and even strengthen. But security assessments, to adequately inform policy discourse, must also look beyond the most probable outcomes and “...always give a nod to worst-case scenarios.”²⁵¹ Despite all said, and the rationality of a stabilizing, pragmatic cooperation, conflict in the Arctic cannot be ruled out – though originating elsewhere. The High North’s future will continue to depend on “...the general, overarching framework formed by Russia’s relations with the U.S. and NATO...”²⁵²

Inasmuch the Putin regime remains in power, the West will in likelihood face an antagonistic Russia. There are no signs Putin’s revisionist policies will be abandoned, and the “post-Cold War policy to integrate Russia into the international system and create a strategic partnership with Moscow is no longer realistic...”²⁵³ Bolstered by the Putin regime’s zero-sum view of power and influence in international relations, Russia will remain belligerent in foreign policy and challenge the U.S. in any arena it has capability to. The mistrust between Russia and the U.S. feed their rivalry, and until the “negative perceptions... are changed, the rivalry will continue.”²⁵⁴ The High North is destined to be collateral damage in the rivalry and potential future conflict between Russia and the U.S. elsewhere on the globe, i.e. in the Baltics.

So, parallel to the balancing act between the U.S. partnership and Russian pragmatic cooperation, it’s in Norway’s interest to pursue mechanisms ensuring “transparency, inclusiveness, and dialogue,” to avoid “provoking mutual suspicions of the parties’ motives and escalation of mutual fears.”²⁵⁵ Herein are two great challenges; first, as long as Russia nurtures its misconceptions of U.S. strategies, there are few steps Norway (and the U.S.) can take to reassure Russia and alter their thinking. Their misconceptions about the West are deeply embedded, and there are currently few obvious confidence-building measures to be taken.²⁵⁶ Admittedly, a first Western step in reassuring Russia could potentially be an acknowledgement

of Russia's "border-sensitivity" and consistent rejection of foreign activity near its borders.²⁵⁷

This paper isn't advocating appeasing Russia, but an acknowledgement of Russian perceptions in future policy considerations is warranted. That said, policies of "restraint (to accommodate Russia's 'worries') doesn't work with Putin..., "²⁵⁸ so such effort may be moot. Norway does, however, acknowledge this sensitivity, historically restricting allied activity in the northern regions.

Moreover, the challenge with Russian misperceptions further speaks to the suggestion to pursue a multilateral institution for security issues in the Arctic, realizing this will challenge the Arctic states' desire to decide who sits at the table. If such a security architecture is truly not possible, discrete dialogue must be established "with carefully selected participants whose goal would be to discuss practical steps [Norway and the U.S.] could take to reassure Russia – but also other difficult issues such as managing the risks of unintended escalation due to miscalculation in a crisis and developing approaches to mutual restraint."²⁵⁹ Inadvertent escalation is truly the chief threat to the High North. As "Moscow [continues] to perceive itself... threatened... [this] could prompt Russia's leaders to misinterpret [U.S. and/or Norwegian] intentions in a crisis...."²⁶⁰ Norway actively pursuing constructive communication and dialogue between Russia and the U.S. may seem overly ambitious, but there are no reasons Norway shouldn't pursue this. Norway cultivates dialogue with both rivals, and nurtures trust in both camps, albeit of different character.

The intention of this paper is to provide an answer to the question whether the High North is heading for cooperation or a new Cold War, despite not presuming to address all factors affecting the future development of international relations in the region. Looking at the region in isolation, the five coastal states – the inner circle – have primarily shared interests, and, most

importantly, “are all strong guardians of ‘UNCLOS’.”²⁶¹ Furthermore, there are “more potential conflicts *within* Arctic states than there are *between* them,”²⁶² and disputes have historically been dealt with in pragmatic ways. The number of institutions will likely increase, and contribute to a further enhancement of cooperation and stability. *Within* the region, the future is promising: the future of the High North is cooperation.

However, the threats to the region come from the outside. They may be induced by “major structural shifts, a tenser international situation and spill-over from conflict to divergences and tensions that exists in the north...”²⁶³ However desirable for Norway, the High North can never be seen in isolation; “[geopolitics] *never* completely dissipates.”²⁶⁴ Russia’s relationship with the U.S. and NATO will dominate the path of the High North, and in this perspective the future of the region is less optimistic. Russia’s strategic rivalry with the U.S. continues, and as Putin stated in December 2016; “We have a shared responsibility to ensure international security and stability... [but] I would like to emphasize that attempts to break the strategic parity are extremely dangerous and can lead to global catastrophe.”²⁶⁵ So, any deliberations on the High North’s future must take the relationship between Russia and the U.S. and NATO into consideration. With Norway’s strong political, cultural, social, and security ties across the Atlantic, the High North will again be defined by geopolitical rivalry, as it was during the Cold War. Presuming the relationship between U.S. and Russia remains antagonistic, and nodding to the worst-case scenario, the future of the High North is a new Cold War.

Notes

¹ The *High North* refers to the area defined by the European parts of the Arctic, including northern Russia. Rolf Tamnes and Kristine Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic – Regional Dynamics in a Global World* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 5. Depending on the themes of interest, debates employ differing definitions of the region, if any at all, in turn

important to understand the context of expressed views. The Arctic may be defined by three distinct ways; by geography, function, and narrative. Geographically, the Arctic may simply be defined as “an ocean surrounded by continents.” This definition provides a core of five littoral states (the United States, Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Norway and Russia), known as the *Arctic Five* (although Iceland desires to be recognized as coastal state within the Arctic region). This underscores the importance of clarifying the terms and names used in debates. The more common and widespread geographical definition is the area north of the Arctic Circle (66° 32' N). Ibid., 2-3. This identifies eight Arctic countries (the Arctic Five and Iceland, Sweden, and Finland – the *Arctic Eight*). Regarding functional definitions, these originate from usage of the region, e.g. military planners defining the area by operational requirements (i.e. the “Russian/Soviet bastion”). The third way is by drawing from the key narratives, with four predominant: the Arctic as home to indigenous people; the European Arctic; the North American Arctic; and the Circumpolar Arctic. The focus of this paper is the narrative of the *High North*, a term used by the Norwegian government as synonymous for *nordområdene* (“the northern areas”), and referencing the European parts of the Arctic and northern Russia – the region of particular interest for Norway. Furthermore, Asian countries, with China, Japan, and South Korea being the “frontrunners in East Asia,” are increasingly pursuing Arctic presence. Linda Jakobsen and Seong-Hyon Lee, “North East Asia eyes on the Arctic,” eds. Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 111. This paper focuses solely on Norway and Russia in the High North.

² Rolf Tamnes and Sven G. Holtsmark, “The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective,” eds. Rolf Tamnes and Kristine Offerdal, *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic – Regional dynamics in a global world* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 13.

³ Jo Inge Bekkevold and Kristine Offerdal, “Norway’s High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders,” eds. Uttam Kumar Sinha and Jo Inge Bekkevold, *Arctic: Commerce, Governance and Policy* (Oxon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2015), 69.

⁴ Tamnes and Holtsmark, “The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective,” 13.

⁵ Nikolai Kingsley, *Singing from Another Hymn Sheet: the Nordic States in the High North* (Stavanger, Norway: Hertervig Akademisk, 2014), 16.

⁶ Defining “security,” and thereby related concerns and threats, vary. Kristoffer Bergh and Ekaterina Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” eds. Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 41. These are however overlapping and independent, but one possible grouping of “relevant security issues” is: “hard” security and conflict; environmental, energy, and economic security; the handling of civil emergencies; and aspects of societal and human security. Alyson J.K. Bailes, “Security in the Arctic: definitions, challenges and solutions,” eds. Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 14. But “despite broader understanding of security and security actors, ...sovereignty has remained the central ordering principle of security in the [Arctic/High North].” Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 175. Hence, “security” in the context of this paper refers consistently to “hard security” and conflict.

⁷ Terms such as “The Great Game,” “Arctic Meltdown,” and “a New Cold War” are prevalent, in varying contexts. Frederic Lasserre, Jérôme Le Roy and Richard Garon, “Is there an

arms race in the Arctic,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 14, Issues 3 and 4 (2012), pp. 1-2. Other descriptions include i.e. “an Arctic Buzz” and “scramble for the Arctic.” Geir Hønneland, *Russia and the Arctic – Environment, Identity and Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 2.

⁸ Robert W. Murray, “Arctic Politics Moving Forward,” eds. Robert W. Murray and Anita Dey Nuttall, *International Relations in the Arctic – Understanding Policy and Government* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014), 624.

⁹ An example of contradicting views may be those of Nikolai Kingsley on one side and Alexander Sergunin and Valery Konyshchev on the other. The two latter claim in *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power* the “...vast majority of authors are either too anti-Russian or openly pro-Russian in their analysis of Russia’s strategy and policies in the post-Cold War Arctic,” proceed to detail Russian strategy, and conclude that “...in contrast with the internationally wide-spread stereotype of Russia as a hard/revisionist power in the Arctic, there are serious grounds to believe that in the foreseeable future Moscow will pursue quite pragmatic and responsible policies in the region.” Alexander Sergunin and Valery Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?* (Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem Press, 2016). These conclusions are in stark contrast to the conclusion of the former, who’s analyzed documents (cables) “originally of a highly classified nature,” and challenges the “more optimistic consensus” prevailing “in academic circles.” In concluding, the research supporting the academic “consensus” is strongly considered to downplay the “abundant evidence of increasing tensions in the region.” Between the Nordic States and their North American counterpart (the U.S. and Canada) on the topic of security in the High North – the Nordic States are “indeed singing from another hymn sheet.” Kingsley, *Singing from Another Hymn Sheet*, 2014.

¹⁰ Ryan C. Maness and Brandon Valeriano, *Russia’s Coercive Diplomacy – Energy, Cyber, and Maritime Policy as New Sources of Power* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 25.

¹¹ Admiral William E. Gortney, “Statement of Admiral William E. Gortney, United States Navy Commander, United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee” (USNORTHCOM and NORAD Posture Statement), 10 March 2016, 2.

¹² Timothy Thomas, “Russia’s Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric – and Putin-Led”, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28 (2015), 458. The core complication is that Putin regards the Western efforts of integrating Russia into the international system and creating strategic partnerships with the country as “fundamentally incompatible with [Putin’s] chosen form of governance and the political, economic and social systems it seeks to establish” and as “a threat... to his regime’s very survival.” Paul Bernstein and Deborah Ball, *Putin’s Russia and U.S. Defense Strategy*, National Defense University workshop report (Washington D.C., USA: National Defense University, August 2015), 2.

¹³ Bekkevold and Offerdal, “Norway’s High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders,” 60.

¹⁴ Tamnes and Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, 176.

¹⁵ Geopolitics relates geographic space and power politics, “often invoked to describe and analyze the pursuit and management of clashing national interests within a specific geographical context.” Tamnes and Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, 6.

¹⁶ Tamnes and Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the*, 177.

¹⁷ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 14.

¹⁸ Early exploitation was primarily hunting for whale, walrus, and seal. Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 14.

¹⁹ "Terra nullius is a Latin term that means land belonging to no one or no man's land. In international law, a territory which has never been subject to the sovereignty of any state, or over which any prior sovereign has expressly or implicitly relinquished sovereignty is terra nullius. Sovereignty over territory which is terra nullius can be acquired through occupation. International sea, and celestial bodies would come under the term terra nullius." "Terra Nullius Law and Legal Definition," U.S. Legal Inc., accessed 6 December 2016, <http://definitions.uslegal.com/t/terra-nullius/>.

²⁰ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 14.

²¹ Ibid., 17.

²² Although, Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 did provide "impetus for the Russian government to perform further studies of the NSR's potential for the development of [Russian] naval sources." Gleb Yarovoy, "Russia's Arctic Policy – Continuity and Changes," eds. Robert W. Murray and Anita Dey Nuttall, *International Relations and the Arctic* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014), 194.

²³ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 18.

²⁴ For Norway, specifically, the "Pomor trade" – a seasonal barter-based trade between the people of Northern Norway and the Pomors of the White Sea lasting for centuries – ended. Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 18.

²⁵ Yarovoy, "Russia's Arctic Policy – Continuity and Changes," 195.

²⁶ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 19.

²⁷ Deliveries were primarily to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, both on the Kola peninsula. Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 20.

²⁸ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," pp. 21-22.

²⁹ Ibid., 22.

³⁰ Ibid., 31.

³¹ The key topics in Gorbachev's appeal included denuclearization, naval arms control, confidence-building measures, energy cooperation, scientific cooperation, empowerment of indigenous people, environmental protection, and opportunities from opening the NSR. Peter Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic – Coming in from the cold* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 98.

³² Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 175.

³³ Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic – Coming in from the cold*, 137.

³⁴ Vladimir Putin gave a speech in Munich, Germany, 20 February 2007, perceived by many as the start of a new Cold War between Russia and the U.S. Addressing Western leaders, to include German chancellor Angela Merkel and then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, he "...lashed out against what he called the unipolar world and... delivered a well-known laundry

list of Moscow's grievances against Washington." Lilia Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation – The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*, trans. Arch Tait (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), 243.

³⁵ Klaus Dodds, "The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, 'Law of the Sea,' and Arctic Ocean," *SAIS Review* 33, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2013), 46.

³⁶ Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 55.

³⁷ Bekkevold and Offerdal, "Norway's High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders," 63.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁹ The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted 10 December 1982. The oceans were long subject to the freedom-of-the-seas doctrine, limiting national rights and jurisdiction over the seas to narrow areas along coasts. The seas were "free and belonging to no one." However, following World War II there was an "impetus to extend national claims over offshore resources." A mesh of claims, increasing pollution, competition for fisheries, the access to resources below seabeds, to name a few, increasingly threatened to "transform the oceans into another arena for conflict and instability." In short, "[the] oceans were generating a multitude of claims, counterclaims, and sovereignty disputes." To ensure stability and promoting an increased use and improved management of ocean resources, the U.N. pursued UNCLOS; adopted in 1982. In short, UNCLOS is an attempt by the international community to regulate "all aspects of the resources of the sea and uses of the ocean, and thus bring a stable order to mankind's very source of life." It embalms the idea that "all problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be addressed as a whole." United Nations, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, "The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (A historical perspective)," United Nations, accessed 15 February 2017, http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_historical_perspective.htm#Continental%20Shelf. Norway and Russia have ratified the treaty, while the U.S. has not. Disputes are submitted to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea established under the convention.

⁴⁰ Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," pp. 55-56.

⁴¹ The Arctic Council (AC) was established 19 September 1996 as a "high level intergovernmental forum to enhance cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States with the active involvement of Arctic indigenous peoples and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues." Arctic Council, "The Arctic Council: A Forum for Peace and Cooperation," Arctic Council, 19 September 2016, accessed 15 February 2017, <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/our-work2/20th-anniversary/416-20th-anniversary-statement-2>. It's often referred to as "the most important international forum in the Arctic," and its influence continues to grow. Svein Vigeland Rottem, "The Arctic Council in Arctic governance: the significance of the Oil Spill Agreement," eds. Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 147. There are eight permanent member states; Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and the United States – the *Arctic Eight*, and six permanent participant organizations (indigenous peoples representation), and a number of observer states, to include China.

⁴² Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 57.

⁴³ Tamnes and Holtmark, “The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective,” 13.

⁴⁴ Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 57.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁶ Marlene Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2014), xxi.

⁴⁷ Ibid., xxi.

⁴⁸ Yarovoy, “Russia’s Arctic Policy – Continuity and Change,” 192.

⁴⁹ Russia’s historical Arctic narrative is that of “man conquering the forces of nature and the relentless focus to achieve military and industrial progress.” Heather Conley and Caroline Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic, A Report of the CSIS Europe Program* (New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), VIII. Furthermore, “defending Russia’s rights to the Arctic shelf and continuing scientific research in the Arctic are all important elements of Putin’s claims of success in the revival of Russia as whole and the Russian North in particular.” Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 50.

⁵⁰ Russian leaders “approach food security differently” compared to other world leaders; foremost, food security is perceived through the “prism of realism,” where national interests of states compete over accessible resources. Stephen K. Wegren, ed., *Putin’s Russia – Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 299.

⁵¹ The second key element was to reinforce this patriotism with “a strong political authority (statehood) that could maintain internal order, the integrity of the country and assert the country’s interest abroad.” Third, the “pragmatic patriotism was to be supra-ethnic and statist.” The fourth key element was that the “new nation state was to be socially just.” Richard Sakwa, *Putin – Russia’s choice* (London, U.K.: Routledge, 2004), pp. 163-164.

⁵² Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 52.

⁵³ Yarovoy, “Russia’s Arctic Policy – Continuity and Change,” 192.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 192.

⁵⁵ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, XII.

⁵⁶ Gwladys Fouche, “Wary of Russia, Norway urges NATO vigilance in the Arctic,” Reuters, accessed 5 January 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-norway-defence-russia-idUSBREA4J0HE20140520>. The Norwegian Defense Minister is Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide.

⁵⁷ Tor Bukkvoll and Kristian Åtland, “Russlands kriger i Georgia og Ukraina – konsekvenser og lærdommer for Norge,” eds. Tormod Heier and Anders Kjølberg, *Norge og Russland – Sikkerhetspolitiske Utfordringer i Nordområdene* (Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 2015),

⁵⁸ Andrei P. Tsygankov, “Foreign Policy and Relations with the United States,” ed. Stephen K. Wegren, *Putin’s Russia – Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 237.

⁵⁹ Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 50.

⁶⁰ Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, speech at the Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic, Moscow, Russia, 22 April 2014, accessed 3 January 2016, www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/7065.

⁶¹ Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 49.

⁶² Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, speech at the Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic, Moscow, Russia, 22 April 2014, accessed 3 January 2016, www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/7065.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Olga Oliker, "Unpacking Russia's New National Security Strategy," Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 7 January 2016, accessed 21 September 2016, <http://www.csis.org/analysis/unpacking-russias-new-national-security-strategy>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Laruelle, *Russia's Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, xxii.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Defense of Spain, "Russian National Security Strategy, December 2015 – Full-text translation," Instituto Espanol de Estudios Estratégicos (Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies), accessed 21 September 2016, <http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2016/Russian-National-Security-Strategy-31Dec2015.pdf>, para. 13.

⁶⁸ Ibid., para. 62. Emphasis added.

⁶⁹ Ibid., para. 99.

⁷⁰ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, VII.

⁷¹ Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, pp. 27-33.

⁷² Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 50.

⁷³ The omission of environmental concerns and indigenous peoples does not reflect a position that these don't have the potential for interstate disagreements, especially facing Russia's challenge in financing the necessary measures needed to improve the environmental situation. About 15% of the Russian Arctic territory is polluted or contaminated, following years of intensive industrial and military activities. Furthermore, the topic of nuclear contamination is specifically salient, with the Barents Sea having the largest concentration of military and civilian nuclear installations in the world, some of the same model as Chernobyl. Exacerbating the situation, nuclear waste was dumped in the Barents and Kara Seas between 1964 and 1991, including nuclear reactors. Russia halted this dumping, but the remaining waste is a serious problem. Russia relies on assistance from Western partners, especially Norway, in implementing nuclear waste treatment projects. Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, pp. 29-30. Moreover, Russia "recognizes the importance of establishing precautionary measures in order to ensure conservation of living resources in the central Arctic Ocean and realizes that this goal can be difficult to achieve without engaging interested non-Arctic states. Andrei Zagorski, "Russia's Arctic governance policies," eds. Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 108. However, these are issues are considered to unlikely have "hard security" consequences in the near future.

⁷⁴ The NSR stretches between the Kara Gate (strait between the islands of Novaja Zemlya and Vaygach, connecting the Kara Sea and the Barents Sea) to Provideniya Bay (at the southern opening of the Bering Strait). Sergunin and Konyshev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 81. The NSR is an issue of utmost importance for Russia. It has deep traditional and historic meaning for Russia, and its future usage is chief – and an issue strongly tied to national security. Throughout the Soviet era, the NSR was “solely a domestic sea route and was closed to international shipping. Ibid., 82. In 2009, eighty-four years after a Soviet icebreaker for the first time transited the passage in one season, two international vessels “made the alleged first commercial transit from Asia to Europe” along the NSR. Russia has today a significant interest in transforming the sea route into a SLOC for international trade. Ibid., 82. This is already on the agenda: “We are reviving the Northern Sea Route...” Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, speech at the Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic, Moscow, Russia, 22 April 2014, accessed 3 January 2016, www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/7065. The advantages of the NSR are apparent looking at the shipping distances, reducing the distance from Western Europe to Asia. I.e., the distance from Rotterdam, The Netherlands, to Yokohama, Japan, is 20,600 km along the Suez Canal-route versus 8,500 km along the NSR. Jakobsen and Lee, “North East Asia eyes on the Arctic,” 113. With shorter distances, the transportation costs may be reduced. However, there are great challenges to overcome: costs of port infrastructure, icebreakers, SAR (Search and Rescue), installations and systems; uncertainty about the route being totally ice-free, creating risk and reducing predictability; the extreme climate and winter season’s darkness demand for ice-class vessels; high insurance premiums; the environmental hazard to a delicate environment; and last, effects of geopolitical and geoeconomic factors on shipping. Sergunin and Konyshev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, pp. 83-85. Thus, while great opportunities are prevalent, there are great risks. Formally, the NSR was opened to international use in 1991, although the legal status of the route remains a contested issue. Russia and Canada view the NSR and Northwest Passage, respectively, as having “historically belonged to them, and oppose international opinion... that they are international waters.” Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 169. Although the law of the sea ensures all states freedom of navigation in EEZs, beyond the limits of the territorial sea, according to UNCLOS Article 58, Canada and Russia both “practice extensive regulation of vessel traffic.” The latter is also a practice justified under UNCLOS, Article 234: “Coastal States have the right to adopt and enforce non-discriminatory laws and regulations for the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution from vessels in ice-covered areas within the limits of the exclusive economic zone, where particularly severe climatic conditions and the presence of ice...” Zagorski, “Russia’s Arctic governance policies,” 88, and United Nations, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, “The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (A historical perspective),” United Nations, accessed 15 February 2017, Articles 58 and 234, http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf). This represents a contentious issue with especially the U.S. SLOCs “constitute an important element of state security” and affects global geopolitical balance. A central component of U.S. global security is its “supremacy on the seas,” enabling global power projection. Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 168. Although the issue creates “Russia and Canada against the rest,” the principle at the core is a trait identified among several Arctic states, most prominent in Russia; a resistance to mechanisms in international law to apply if it’s “at the expense of losing control of national jurisdiction.” Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 187. Legal disputes aside, international shipping companies are using the NSR,

albeit minimal. Numbers vary in sources, but the trend shows a decrease; i.e. the amount of cargo transported along the NSR dropped 77 percent from 2013 to 2014. Trude Pettersen, "Northern Sea Route traffic plummeted," Barents Observer, 16 December 2014, accessed 10 January 2016, <http://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2014/12/northern-sea-route-traffic-plummeted-16-12>.

Adding to the decrease in traffic, "infrastructure development projects... particularly in support of the NSR, are... experiencing delays." Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, X.

⁷⁵ The legal status of Arctic passages is subject to a wide range of interpretations, depending on the classification of the waters, status of archipelagos crossed, access points, historic considerations, and so on. The U.N. 1982 Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS) states "that the regulations for straits used for international navigation are subordinate to those of ice-covered areas." Thus, littoral states can impose limitations on navigation when ice conditions increase the risks of accidents or pollution. Canada and Russia consider the Northwest Passage and the NSR, respectively, as historically belonging to them, and oppose any views of international actors arguing they are international waters. Laruelle, *Russia's Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 169.

⁷⁶ Kathleen J. Hancock and Taylor René Lane, "Energy," ed. Stephen K. Wegren, *Putin's Russia – Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 277.

⁷⁷ U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), "Country Analysis Brief: Russia," updated 25 October 2015, accessed 6 January 2016, <http://www.eia.gov/beta/international/analysis.cfm?iso=RUS>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ A petrostate's economy is "typified primarily by its orientation toward natural resources," and shows no interest in modernization "but in preserving the natural resource economy." Both these characteristics, to include others, fit contemporary Russia. Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation*, 132.

⁸⁰ While choosing to rely on natural resources, there's no "counterbalance of independent institutions and a civil society... [to restrain] the self-interest of the natural resources lobby." This is in stark contrast to Norway, who's chosen to diversify its economy, "by harmonizing the aspirations of the oil industry with those of other sectors and interest groups..." Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation*, 133.

⁸¹ Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly," President of Russia, accessed 2 April 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379>.

⁸² Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 24.

⁸³ Ibid., VII. It should be noted that in research for this paper, data have varied among sources. While the above report states that the region contains two-thirds of Russia's oil and gas reserves, another source, in turn referring to a Russian article, states the region contains "95 per cent of Russia's gas and sixty per cent of Russia's oil reserves." Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 49. The data itself has less

relevance than the fact that the Arctic contains a high percentage of Russian petroleum reserves and petroleum revenues are a pillar of the Russian state economy.

⁸⁴ Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation*, 134.

⁸⁵ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 25.

⁸⁶ The development of e.g. the Shtokman field has been postponed, which should have commenced in 2013. Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 27.

⁸⁷ Hancock and Lane, “Energy,” 293.

⁸⁸ Russia holds one-third of the world’s iron, iron ore, and carbon reserves, and one-third of the world’s gold, nickel, and chromium deposits. Today, twenty-five Russian centers for mining activities operate in the Russian Arctic. Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 53.

⁸⁹ Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, speech at the Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic, Moscow, Russia, 22 April 2014, accessed 3 January 2016, www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/7065.

⁹⁰ The sectoral line is “the line (meridian) of longitude that starts from the terminus of the land boundary and intersects with the North Pole.” Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 95.

⁹¹ Under UNCLOS, “a coastal state has exclusive sovereign rights to explore and exploit the natural resources of its continental shelf up to 200 nautical miles from its shores. Beyond this limit, it has to provide scientific evidence to establish the extent of the legally defined continental shelf in order to exercise the same rights.” Furthermore, “the continental shelf of seabed and subsoil of the submarine areas that extend beyond its territorial sea throughout the *natural prolongation* of its land territory to the outer edge of the continental margin.” Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 98. Thus, a state’s sovereign rights may be extended to 350 nautical miles, if certain scientific criteria are met; either “a line delineated... by reference to the outermost fixed points at each of which the thickness of sedimentary rocks is at least 1 per cent of the shortest distance from such point to the foot of the continental slope; or... a line delineated... by reference to fixed points not more than 60 nautical miles from the foot of the continental slope.” United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,” The United Nations, accessed 10 January 2017, http://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf, Article 76.

⁹² Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 97.

⁹³ Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, speech at the Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic, Moscow, Russia, 22 April 2014, accessed 3 January 2016, www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/7065.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ In the UNCLOS claim of 2001, Russia “argued that the Lemonosov Ridge and the Alpha-Mendelev Ridge are both geological extensions of its continental Siberian shelf and, thus, that parts of the Central Arctic Ocean, as well as parts of the Barents Sea, the Bering Sea, and the Sea

of Okhotsk, fall under its jurisdiction.” See note 88. Sergunin and Konyshev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 140.

⁹⁶ The history of the Norwegian-Russian dispute on the Barents Sea dates to the 1920s. However, the two countries first entered informal talks about the maritime boundary in the Barents Sea in 1970, following claims by each country to exclusive rights to the continental shelf in the 1960s, but these were brought to a halt. The disputed area came about as a result of differing criteria the countries based their claims on; while Moscow stuck to the sectoral line (see note 85), Norway based its claim on a median line between the coasts on either side of the border. The continental shelf between these two lines (approximately 155,000 square kilometers and overlapping EEZs) constituted the disputed area. A “Loop Hole” was created in 1977 following the establishments of a Norwegian EEZ and Russian Fishery Zone, both 200 nautical miles. Realizing the need to regulate foreign fishing in the Barents Sea, a provisional fishing agreement was signed in 1978. Numerous factors led finally to a compromise, most importantly the ratification of UNCLOS by both Norway and Russia, in 1996 and 1997, respectively. A final agreement was signed 15 September 2010, and subsequently approved by both national parliaments, although to vocal protests in Moscow; Norway withdrew some of its territorial claims, while Russia agreed to share the disputed area in almost equal divisions. Sergunin and Konyshev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power*, pp. 127-133.

⁹⁷ Bekkevold and Offerdal, “Norway’s High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders,” 62.

⁹⁸ Within the U.N., the claims are reviewed by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLSC). Katarzyna Zysk, “The Evolving Arctic Security Environment: An Assessment,” ed. Stephen J. Blank, *Russia in the Arctic* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 106.

⁹⁹ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 175.

¹⁰⁰ Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 113.

¹⁰¹ Paal Sigurd Hilde, “Armed forces and the security challenges in the Arctic,” eds. Rolf Tamnes and Kristine Offerdal, *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic – Regional dynamics in a global world* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 154.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁰³ Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia lost the ports of Paldiski in Estonia (in the Baltic Sea) and leased the port at Sevastopol from the Ukraine until 2014. Sevastopol is on the Crimean Peninsula. The status of the Black Sea port is a contentious issue, and only reinforces the importance of the Arctic ports on the Kola peninsula. Laruelle, *Russia’s Arctic Strategies and the Future of the Far North*, 113.

¹⁰⁴ As noted, the Kola peninsula is home to the majority of the Russian nuclear submarines. In a military conflict with the U.S., these capabilities need to be defended. The submarine patrols of the Northern Fleet are concentrated in areas of the Barents Sea – designated the *bastion*. In a conflict, a prioritized task is to protect these bases and patrol areas from adversaries; Russia will seek to control the areas of immediate vicinity – pursue *Anti-Access (A2)* – and deny access in the more forward-situated areas – pursue *Area Denial (AD)*. The *bastion defense* “reaches northern parts of the Norwegian territory, the Barents Sea, and the Norwegian Sea. The

Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort* (Oslo, Norway: Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015), pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁵ Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 144.

¹⁰⁶ The spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is a Russian concern. According to the Russian Military Doctrine, approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 25 December 2014, one of the "main external military risks" is "proliferation of weapons of mass destruction ..." The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation", accessed 26 September 2016, <http://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029>, 3. But the term "nuclear war" refers here to the prospect of a military confrontation between Russia and the United States involving the exchange of nuclear weapons.

¹⁰⁷ Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 143.

¹⁰⁸ The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 25 December 2014)," The Russian Federation, accessed 26 September 2016, <http://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029>, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 144.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹¹¹ Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic," 6.

¹¹² Trude Pettersen, "Arctic Ambassador: There is no militarization of the Arctic," *Barents Observer*, 3 February 2014, accessed 31 January 2017, <http://barentsobserver.com/en/arctic/2014/02/arctic-ambassador-there-no-militarization-arctic-03-02>.

¹¹³ The ambition is to increase modern defense systems from 20% in 2011 to 70% in 2020, with a primary focus on cruise- and ballistic missile systems. The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Dale R. Herspring, "Military Reform," ed. Stephen K. Wegren, *Putin's Russia – Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 328. The average monthly exchange rate between the Russian Ruble to the U.S. Dollar in 2012 was 0.023886 to the dollar. Hence, 20 and 3 trillion 2012 Rubles is the equivalent to 477.72 and 71.658 billion 2012 U.S. dollars. X-Rates, "US Dollar per 1 Russian Ruble Monthly average," accessed 20 March 2017, <http://www.x-rates.com/average/?from=RUB&to=USD&amount=1&year=2012>.

¹¹⁵ Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic?," 30.

¹¹⁶ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 69.

¹¹⁷ Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic?," 17.

¹¹⁸ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 70.

¹¹⁹ Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, speech at the Meeting of the Security Council on State Policy in the Arctic, Moscow, Russia, 22 April 2014, accessed 3 January 2016, www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/7065.

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- ¹²⁰ In Russian policy and national strategies, economic interests equal security interests.
- ¹²¹ Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 147.
- ¹²² Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 53.
- ¹²³ Ibid., 53.
- ¹²⁴ Ibid., 53.
- ¹²⁵ Katarzyna Zysk, “Mellom fredsretorikk og militær opprustning: Russlands sikkerhetspolitiske og militære atferd i nordområdene,” eds. Tormod Heier and Anders Kjølberg, *Norge og Russland – Sikkerhetspolitiske Utfordringer i Nordområdene* (Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 2015), 75.
- ¹²⁶ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 70.
- ¹²⁷ Ibid., IX.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid., XIII.
- ¹²⁹ Lasserre et al., “Is there an arms race in the Arctic?,” 7.
- ¹³⁰ Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 54.
- ¹³¹ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 73.
- ¹³² Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 55.
- ¹³³ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia’s Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, IX.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid., IX.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., X.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid., X.
- ¹³⁷ “Central to the development of [Russian] military strategy is the fact that Russia places high value on the development of cruise and ballistic missile...” The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort*, 19.
- ¹³⁸ Ibid., 29.
- ¹³⁹ Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, “A call for unity, shared interests and common responsibility,” speech/statement, Office of the Prime Minister, Oslo, Norway, 13 May 2016.
- ¹⁴⁰ Dave Majumdar, “The Russian Air Force is getting serious,” *Russia Insider*, accessed 3 October 2016, <http://russia-insider.com/en/politics/russian-air-force-back-stealth-su-35s-and-syria/ri15775>.
- ¹⁴¹ “Sustainability issues” refer to i.e. structural issues that may limit operational status of aircraft, commonly a result of a lack of preventive maintenance and modification programs aiming to ensure continued viability of aging fleets – as an example.
- ¹⁴² The data as presented here are based on an analysis with a selected timeline of 1988 and 2012. Furthermore, they relate to the Russian fleet in general, not solely the Northern Fleet. Overall tonnage peaked in 1990 at 2.6 million tons (Mt) but decreased to an all-time low of 1 Mt in 2008, then up to 1.07 Mt in 2012. Lasserre et al., “Is there an arms race in the Arctic?,” 18. Furthermore, while the Navy saw an increase from 2008, this did not relate to the Northern fleet;

in the same period it sank from 0.583 to 0.545 Mt. Ibid., pp. 19-22. Figures of tonnage reveal nothing about the quality of the equipment, quality of training, or employment doctrines, tactics and strategies, which calls for further studies, but the data reveal a similar gap between ambitions and reality as described for the strategic bombers of the Air Force

¹⁴³ The average age of the Russian fleet was 14 years in 1991 and it remained stable at 16 years to 2002, at which time it aged rapidly; to an all-time high in 2012 at 23 years (with average age of i.e. amphibious landing ships at 35 years). Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic?," pp. 23-35.

¹⁴⁴ Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic?," 36.

¹⁴⁵ Within the nuclear submarines, the Borei-class (entered service in 2012) are to replace the Delta III-class (entered service in 1976), five of six Delta IV (entered service in 1985) have recently been upgraded, while all Typhoons (entered service in 1981) are to be decommissioned gradually towards 2019. The Borei-class is delayed, due to a general decay of Russian shipyard capabilities and know-how following 1991. As to attack submarines, five of seven Oscar II (guided missile submarines, entered service in 1986) have been modernized the last decade. Numerous Akula I/II, Sierra I/II, and Victor III (Akula-class submarines entered service 1986, the Sierra I-class in 1987, Sierra II-class in 1992, and the Victor III-class in 1979) are in service, but with unknown operational status. There are similar delays to the replacement of the two latter, the Yasen/Graney class (entered service in 2014). Although more units have been ordered, the reported price will likely result in revised plans. Unconfirmed reports suggest a cost of more than 1 billion dollars each. For conventional submarines, the trend is similar, as for the whole Navy. Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic?," pp. 29-30.

¹⁴⁶ The Russian admiralty asserted it would build 5-6 carrier groups by 2025, but the ambition has been postponed to 2060 (and to two groups, if possible), as Russia acknowledged a lack of financial resources. In addition to aircraft carriers (Ulyanovsk-class), a group includes Gorshkov-class large frigates, Stereguschiy-class corvettes and other corvettes. Lasserre et al., "Is there an arms race in the Arctic?," 34. As for icebreakers, the Navy's capacities have declined to 4 operational. These are Dobryna Nikitich-class light icebreakers, built between 1960 and 1971, while most in the High North are civilian. In general, few ships have been commissioned – while those that have are predominantly Corvettes: Two Dergash-class corvettes, two Gepard-class corvettes, two Astrakhan-class corvettes, two Stereguschiy-class corvettes, the *Mudryy* Neustrashimyy-class frigate, and the *Peter the Great* Kirov cruiser in 1998, supporting the claim that the Russian Navy is focusing more on a lighter, coastal defense, while acknowledging some minor exceptions. Ibid., 38. As for the financial challenges, "Russia remains highly dependant on revenues from oil and gas, and the economy is still heavily centralized." Sophia Dimitrakopoulou and Andrew Liarpoulos, "Russia's National Security Strategy to 2020: A Great Power in the Making?," *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4 (1) (Winter 2010), 39.

¹⁴⁷ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 176.

¹⁴⁸ The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort*, 19.

¹⁴⁹ Thomas, "Russia's Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric – and Putin-Led," 453.

¹⁵⁰ Can Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking: Non-Linear Warfare and Reflexive Control*, Research paper no. 121 (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College Research Division, November 2015), pp. 2-3.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 453-454.

¹⁵² Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking: Non-Linear Warfare and Reflexive Control*, 12.

¹⁵³ Franklin D. Kramer and Bantz J. Craddock, *Effective Defense of the Baltics* (Washington D.C: Atlantic Council of the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, May 2016), 5.

¹⁵⁴ Bukkvoll and Åtland, "Russlands kriger i Georgia og Ukraina – konsekvenser og lærdommer for Norge," 95.

¹⁵⁵ Kalev Stoicescu, "The Russian Threat to Security in the Baltic Sea Region," Briefing Paper (Estonia: International Centre for Defense and Security, 6 October 2015), 7.

¹⁵⁶ See especially the research paper from Can Kasapoglu, published November 2015 at NATO Defense College, Rome, for more on Russia's renewed military thinking, and increased use of non-linear warfare and reflexive control. Can Kasapoglu, *Russia's Renewed Military Thinking: Non-Linear Warfare and Reflexive Control*, Research paper no. 121 (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College Research Division, November 2015).

¹⁵⁷ Berg and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 64.

¹⁵⁸ Bekkevold and Offerdal, "Norway's High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders," 59.

¹⁵⁹ Former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre, "The High North – top of the world – top of the agenda," speech/statement, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., 15 June 2006.

¹⁶⁰ Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende, "The Arctic: Important for Norway, Important for the world," speech/statement, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, Norway, 16 April 2015.

¹⁶¹ Bekkevold and Offerdal, "Norway's High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders," 60.

¹⁶² Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic – Coming in from the cold*, 27.

¹⁶³ For more on Norwegian national interests, security concerns, and policies regarding the High North, see The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort* (Oslo, Norway: Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015). Supplemental sources include Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), Geir Hønneland's chapter "Norway's High Arctic Policy" in Robert W. Murray and Anita Dey Nuttall, eds., *International Relations and the Arctic* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014), and Jo Inge Bekkevold and Kristine Offerdal's chapter on "Norway's High North Policy and..." in Uttam Kumar Sinha and Jo Inge Bekkevold, eds., *Arctic: Commerce, Governance and Policy* (Oxon, U.K.: Routledge, 2015). Lastly, Sergunin and Konysev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?* offers a chapter on overlapping interests and goals between Russia and Norway (pp. 103-107).

¹⁶⁴ Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, "A call for unity, shared interests and common responsibility," speech/statement, Office of the Prime Minister, Oslo, Norway, 13 May 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Realists will expect the Arctic to be “marked by increased rivalry between the most powerful Arctic states... seeking to advance their national interests by acquiring the new spoils.” Liberals will to the contrary envision “a cooperative and pluralistic politics emerging... with the states of the region working together to their mutual advantage through the Arctic Council and relying on international law to regulate any disputes that do occur.” For a Marxist, the region will inevitably “suffer the fate of imperial and neo-imperial peripheries and be exploited by the pursuit of profit by global business and political elites.” Lastly, a Social Constructivist wouldn’t necessarily dispute the preceding visions but will contend that “concepts like sovereignty, globalization, and security ... are subjective social constructs and hence likely to be interpreted and responded to differently by different actors.” See Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic – Coming in from the cold*, pp. 13-16.

¹⁶⁶ Sergunin and Konyshv, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 18.

¹⁶⁷ Neil Melvin and Kristoffer Bergh, “Introduction,” eds. Linda Jakobsen and Neil Melvin, *The New Arctic Governance* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.

¹⁶⁸ Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 71.

¹⁶⁹ Signatories to the Ilulissat declaration were the *Arctic Five*: Russia, Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, and the United States. It was signed 28 May 2008 at the Arctic Ocean Conference in Ilulissat, Greenland. “The Ilulissat Declaration,” Arctic Ocean Conference, Ilulissat, Greenland, 27-29 May 2008, Oceanlaw.org, accessed 19 September 2016, www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/ilulissat_Declaration.pdf.

¹⁷⁰ While Iceland, Sweden, and Finland were not invited to the Arctic Ocean Conference in 2008 – under the rationale that they don’t have a direct border to the Arctic Ocean – they have since proclaimed support to the declaration’s commitments.

¹⁷¹ Dodds, “The Ilulissat Declaration (2008): The Arctic States, ‘Law of the Sea,’ and Arctic Ocean,” 53.

¹⁷² Ibid., 53.

¹⁷³ “The Ilulissat Declaration,” Arctic Ocean Conference, Ilulissat, Greenland, 27-29 May 2008, Oceanlaw.org, accessed 19 September 2016, www.oceanlaw.org/downloads/arctic/ilulissat_Declaration.pdf, 1.

¹⁷⁴ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, pp. 182-183.

¹⁷⁵ Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 67.

¹⁷⁶ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 183.

¹⁷⁷ Bekkevold and Offerdal, “Norway’s High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders,” 60.

¹⁷⁸ Bergh and Klimenko, “Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic,” 65.

¹⁷⁹ During the Cold War, Norway sought to *deter* the Soviet Union through NATO and ties to the U.S. In parallel, Norway developed a policy of *reassurance* towards the Soviet Union, by self-imposing restraints on allied military activity on Norwegian territory in peacetime. Bekkevold and Offerdal, “Norway’s High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders,” 60.

¹⁸⁰ The U.S. has “noted elements in Norway’s High North policy which it has found unhelpful,” and may perceive Norway as “unwilling to jeopardize its bilateral relations with

Russia by effectively criticizing its objectionable policies [regarding the Ukraine, Russian pressure on the Baltics, Poland and other allies] publically.” Kingsley, *Singing from Another Hymn Sheet: the Nordic States in the High North*, 38.

¹⁸¹ Olga Oliker, “Unpacking Russia’s New National Security Strategy,” Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 7 January 2016, accessed 21 September 2016, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/unpacking-russias-new-national-security-strategy>.

¹⁸² Stoicescu, “The Russian Threat to Security in the Baltic Sea Region,” 9.

¹⁸³ “State principles” refer to those the state and society are organized around – fundamental values and standards used to structure the systems, organize states, and consolidate societies. Russian principles are not compatible with liberal democracy, and accordingly with Norwegian. Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation*, 166.

¹⁸⁴ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 178.

¹⁸⁵ The reader is reminded of narrowed focus of this paper to the interests of Norway and Russia. There is potential for conflicts between Russia and other littoral Arctic states, all of which would draw Norway into the conflict. Besides Russia, all Arctic Five nations are NATO members. This paper focuses on potential conflicts between Norway and Russia in isolation, and in this regard, the NSR, territorial delimitation, and fisheries are not likely to generate a conflict, notwithstanding disagreements.

¹⁸⁶ With regard to the NSR, Norway and Russia share an interest but disagrees on the interpretation of the SLOC’s status. Despite this, the issue is not likely to cause a conflict between Norway and Russia, as Canada supports the Russian position.

¹⁸⁷ The Svalbard Treaty was signed 9 February 1920 in Paris by the heads of state of the United States, Great Britain and Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, India, Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden. As of May 2016, 33 additional states have ratified the treaty, bringing the number of ratifications to 43. “The Svalbard Treaty,” University of Oslo: The Faculty of Law, accessed 15 February 2017, <http://www.jus.uio.no/english/services/library/treaties/01/1-11/svalbard-treaty.xml>.

¹⁸⁸ Heather A. Conley, Alan D. Hemmings, Kristine Offerdal, and Nilufer Oral, *History Lessons for the Arctic*, ed. Heather A. Conley, a report of the CSIS Europe Program with support from the Brzezinski Institute of Geostrategy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 14.

¹⁸⁹ A third restriction is that Norway is restricted to utilize Svalbard for any “warlike purposes,” leading Russia at times to argue the archipelago a demilitarized zone. Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, 15.

¹⁹⁰ The exclusion from the treaty in 1924 led the Soviet Union to assert their sovereignty over Franz Joseph Land, Novaya Zemlya, New Siberian Island and the remaining parts of Siberia. Although there was no legal basis for the annexation (see note 85 regarding the Soviet use of the sectorial line, the basis for the Russian claim), nothing was done. Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic – Coming in from the cold*, 12.

¹⁹¹ In the 1920s, the Soviet Union linked the Svalbard issue to Norway’s formal recognition of the Soviet Union. Reluctant to being the first Western nation to do so, it was not until Great Britain recognized the Soviet Union in 1924 that Norway followed. It was following this the

Soviet Union recognized Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard, in 1924 (to include the island of Bjørnøya). The Soviet Union formally joined the Svalbard Treaty in 1933, though, following the recognition of the Soviet Union by the U.S. Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁹² Norway was deliberate in not naming it an economic zone, due to the reluctance to antagonize the signatories to the treaty, although Norway's interpretation is clear: since Svalbard is Norwegian sovereign territory and in line with an economic zone around continental Norway, the archipelago generated an economic zone. Conley et al, *History Lessons for the Arctic*, 18.

¹⁹³ Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, 19.

¹⁹⁴ Helge Lurås, *Hva Truer Norge Nå? Sikkerhetspolitiske selvbedrag etter den kalde krigen* (Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Damm, 2015), 178.

¹⁹⁵ A Norwegian tax regime would incur a seventy-eight percent tax on income. Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, 23.

¹⁹⁶ Bekkevold and Offerdal, "Norway's High North Policy and New Asian Stakeholders," 62.

¹⁹⁷ There are currently three unresolved maritime borders in the Arctic: a Canadian-U.S. disagreement in the Beaufort Sea; a U.S.-Russian dispute in the Bering and Chukchi Seas; and a Canadian-Danish disagreement concerning Hans Island in the Nares Strait. Zysk, "The Evolving Arctic Security Environment: An Assessment," 106.

¹⁹⁸ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, XII.

¹⁹⁹ Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation*, 297. The institution of leadership is "immensely important" in Russia. In times of instability, uncertainty, and insecurity, "society sees its salvation in its leader." Ibid., 271.

²⁰⁰ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 177.

²⁰¹ Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 71.

²⁰² Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 32.

²⁰³ Exxonmobil has i.e. withdrawn its participation in exploring oil reserves in the Kara Sea, which it had signed an agreement with Rosneft for. Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 33.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

²⁰⁵ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, X.

²⁰⁶ Gerard O'Dwyer, "Eyeing Russia, Norway pumps prior savings into its defense budget," DefenseNews, 3 February 2017, accessed 6 February 2017, <http://www.defensenews.com/articles/eying-russia-norway-pumps-prior-savings-into-its-defense-budget>.

²⁰⁷ Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, 21.

²⁰⁸ Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, "A call for unity, shared interests and common responsibility," speech/statement, Office of the Prime Minister, Oslo, Norway, 13 May 2016.

²⁰⁹ Kingsley, *Singing from Another Hymn Sheet: the Nordic States in the High North*, 12.

²¹⁰ Melvin and Bergh, "Introduction," 4.

²¹¹ Tamnes and Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic – Regional Dynamics in a Global World*, 171.

²¹² Maness and Valeriano, *Russia's Coercive Diplomacy – Energy, Cyber, and Maritime Policy as New Sources of Power*, pp. 11-13. Russia's energy policy has "long aimed at provoking divisions within Europe, using different pricing and destination clauses to pit customer states against each other." Jeffrey Mankoff, "Relations with the European Union," ed. Stephen K. Wegren, *Putin's Russia – Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, 6th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 237.

²¹³ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, XVI.

²¹⁴ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 44.

²¹⁵ While only the Arctic Council (AC) is specifically mentioned in this paper, it is not the only avenue/arena of multinational cooperation in the Arctic. There are three other "institutions," when based on three criteria: they are 1) based on legally binding agreements, for; 2) multilateral cooperation, covering; 3) the entire Arctic. These are the 1973 International Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears, the 2011 Search and Rescue Agreement, and the 2013 Oil Spill Prevention Agreement. At the upcoming AC meeting in May 2017, an agreement on scientific cooperation is to be signed, and an agreement for fisheries in Arctic waters is under negotiation. The AC itself does not meet the criteria listed above, as it's not based on a legal agreement, but on political, non-binding declarations. Beyond this, there a number of regional organizations regarding Arctic matters, but the Arctic Council is the primary institution in the context of this paper. Counselor for Fisheries and Oceans Alf Håkon Hoel, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Washington D.C., to the author, e-mail, 21 March 2017.

²¹⁶ Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, VI.

²¹⁷ Tamnes and Holtmark, "The geopolitics of the Arctic in historical perspective," 44.

²¹⁸ Melvin and Bergh, "Introduction," 10.

²¹⁹ Sergunin and Konyshchev, *Russia in the Arctic – Hard or Soft Power?*, 157.

²²⁰ This was due to fear that allowing the AC to discuss military and security matters, it "could send mixed and harmful signals of a potential militarization of the Arctic." Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, 113.

²²¹ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 176.

²²² Ibid., 176.

²²³ Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, VI.

²²⁴ The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort*, 72.

²²⁵ Bergh and Klimenko, "Understanding national approaches to security in the Arctic," 75.

²²⁶ Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic – Coming in from the cold*, 139.

²²⁷ Jakobsen and Lee, "North East Asia eyes on the Arctic," 145.

²²⁸ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 175.

²²⁹ Tamnes and Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, 177.

²³⁰ Former Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide, "Innledning – Norge og globale maktskifter," eds. Odd Mølster and Åsmund Weltzien, *Norge og det Nye verdenskartet* (Oslo, Norway: Cappelen Damm, 2013), pp. 9-10.

²³¹ Tamnes and Offerdal, eds., *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic*, 177.

²³² Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, V.

²³³ Conley and Rohloff, *The New Ice Curtain – Russia's Strategic Reach to the Arctic*, XIV. Moscow's international posture has assumed "a dual response to the challenges posed by the West: limited cooperation in areas of mutual interests, and assertiveness/active promotion of alternative international ties in those areas where such cooperation was not possible." Tsygankov, "Foreign Policy and Relations with the United States," 241.

²³⁴ The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort*, 71.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

²³⁶ Victor D. Cha and David C. Kang, *Nuclear North Korea: A debate on engagement strategies* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2003), 135.

²³⁷ Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, 12.

²³⁸ The Norwegian Ministry of Defense, *Unified Effort*, 72.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁴⁰ Sir John McColl, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, "Preventing NATO-Russian Escalation," Project Syndicate, 16 December 2016, accessed 6 April 2017, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/preventing-nato-russia-escalation-by-john-mccoll-2016-12>.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁴² Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly," President of Russia, accessed 2 April 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379>.

²⁴³ Maness and Valeriano, *Russia's Coercive Diplomacy – Energy, Cyber, and Maritime Policy as New Sources of Power*, 206.

²⁴⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future – Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990), 9.

²⁴⁵ Williamson Murray, "History, War, and the Future," *Foreign Policy Institute* (Fall 2008), 545.

²⁴⁶ Zysk, "The Evolving Arctic Security Environment: An Assessment," 117.

²⁴⁷ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 169.

²⁴⁸ Gerard O'Dwyer, "Eyeing Russia, Norway pumps prior savings into its defense budget," *DefenseNews*, 3 February 2017, accessed 6 February 2017, <http://www.defensenews.com/articles/eying-russia-norway-pumps-prior-savings-into-its-defense-budget>.

²⁴⁹ The West has “downgraded” its relations with Russia, from “partnership” (first introduced by Gorbachev) to “cooperation” to “selective cooperation” to “engagement” and finally to “selective engagement.” Shevtsova, *Russia – Lost in Translation*, 164. Whichever term is most appropriate is of less importance – this paper refers to “pragmatic cooperation.”

²⁵⁰ Zysk, “The Evolving Arctic Security Environment: An Assessment,” 109.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 109. In addition to the U.S. and NATO, other possible stakeholders may become increasingly relevant in the future, such as the Asian countries.

²⁵³ Bernstein and Ball, *Putin’s Russia and U.S. Defense Strategy*, 2.

²⁵⁴ Maness and Valeriano, *Russia’s Coercive Diplomacy – Energy, Cyber, and Maritime Policy as New Sources of Power*, 211.

²⁵⁵ Zysk, “The Evolving Arctic Security Environment: An Assessment,” 115.

²⁵⁶ Bernstein and Ball, *Putin’s Russia and U.S. Defense Strategy*, 12.

²⁵⁷ Thomas, “Russia’s Military Strategy and Ukraine: Indirect, Asymmetric – and Putin-Led,” 458.

²⁵⁸ Stoicescu, “The Russian Threat to Security in the Baltic Sea Region,” 11.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁶⁰ Admiral Gortney, 2016 USNORTHCOM and NORAD Posture Statement, 2.

²⁶¹ Jakobsen and Melvin, eds., *The New Arctic Governance*, 169.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 172.

²⁶⁴ Conley et al., *History Lessons for the Arctic*, VI. Emphasis added.

²⁶⁵ Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly,” President of Russia, accessed 2 April 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379>.

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